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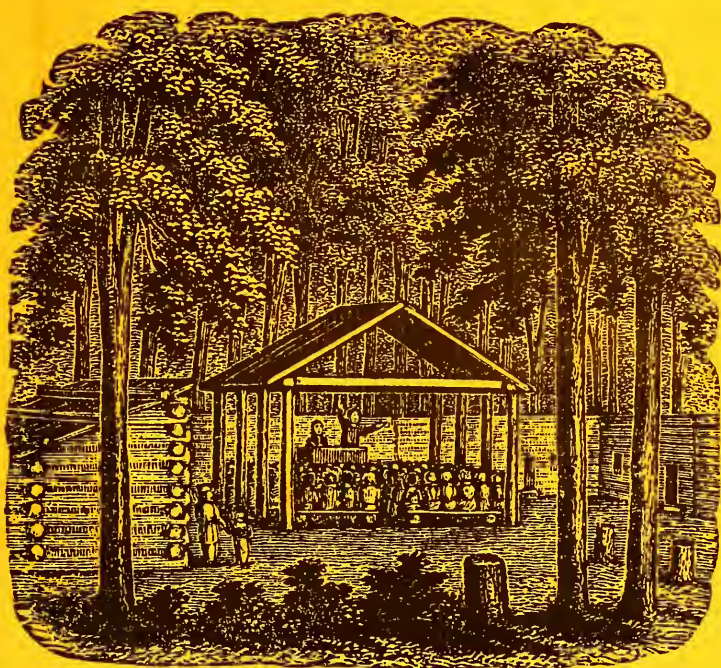








# History of Tabernacle United Methodist Church



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# **HISTORY OF TABERNACLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**Henderson Point Road  
Townsville, North Carolina**

**Written and Edited by Michael G. Cartwright**

**A Project of the Tabernacle Bicentennial Committee**

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**This history of our congregation  
is dedicated in loving memory  
of all who have gone before us,  
and in honor of all who are seeking  
to further God's Kingdom through  
Tabernacle United Methodist Church.**



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This history of our congregation is the result of the efforts of many people. The Bicentennial Committee worked for a full year on this and other projects for the Bicentennial Year of American Methodism. Our work has been as thorough as time and circumstances would allow.

A number of persons have helped the Bicentennial Committee with this project. It is probably not possible to write a history of one United Methodist Church without looking at other churches (both Methodist and non-Methodist) which have been related to that church through the **connections** of a common history and a common ministry. After all, these are truly "the ties that bind!" In our case, the "connections" have spanned several states and annual conferences and have involved the efforts of Methodists and non-Methodists in telling our story.

First, we must thank Mr. Nat Hutcheson of Boydton, Virginia, for his invaluable "tip" about the Taylors of Tabernacle, and other information he provided about the locations of Methodist Churches in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, in years past. We also are grateful to Mrs. H.N. Allen for her assistance in clarifying several puzzles related to the history of Methodism in Mecklenburg County — and Boydton, Virginia, in particular.

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Two students offered their time and talents in ways which have made the book a much better work than it otherwise would have been without their special gifts: Lee Norwood, from Clarksville, Virginia, drew the maps of the circuits and the Taylor family connections with Methodist Churches in this

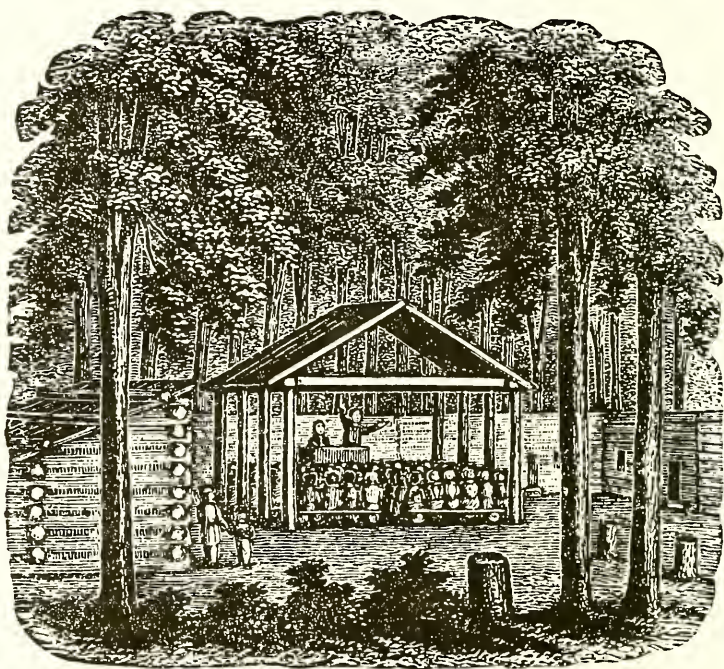
area. Paul Cartwright, from Conway, Arkansas, spent his vacation researching biographical information on pastors who have served Tabernacle as well as researching other aspects of the history of Tabernacle Church in the nineteenth century.

The librarians at the Perry H. Leslie Memorial Library in Henderson, the Richard H. Thornton Library in Oxford, and the Halifax County Library in Halifax, N.C., all provided helpful assistance during the research stages of this project. Linda Gard, Circulation Librarian at The Duke Divinity School Library, also lent valuable assistance in locating sources for this work. Personnel in the County Clerk's and the Registry of Deeds offices in Mecklenburg County and in Granville County also were helpful in locating documents important to this effort.

A number of persons in our congregation volunteered their time and energy during the production of this book. Dave and Betty Rae Norwood helped locate books, addresses and other information. Alice Wilson helped with the research on the history of the Sunday school. Charlie and Frankie Walker made the long trip to Tennessee to attend the annual Camp Meeting of the Taylor Kinsfolk Association at Tabernacle, Tennessee. Sarah Norwood, Eloise Richardson, and Anna Walker all helped type portions of the book. Anna Walker proof-read many pages. Sandy Tillotson helped locate photographs and other historical memorabilia. Robert Smiley made numerous photographs of the church and congregational activities. Oliver E. Brewer's impeccable records and good memory provided invaluable assistance in closing the gaps in information with which we struggled in the latter portion of the book. Lizzie Brewer Wilson, who kept the dream of the church history alive for all these years, also made important contributions — both in what she had already written and what she helped all of us to remember as this history was being written. Thanks go to Eloise Richardson, as well, for her leadership as chairperson of the Bicentennial Committee.

Thanks also go to Warren Nelms at Quick Printing Company of Henderson and to Allen, Delores and Wesley at Brodie-Jones Printing Company for their patience with all the changes, additions, and re-arrangement during the last weeks of production. Finally, a word of thanks goes to WVSP radio station, 90.5 FM, in Warrenton, N.C., for their late night jazz, blues, and big band music programs **without which** this history would never have been completed!

Michael G. Cartwright  
September 23, 1984



TABERNACLE



## INTRODUCTION

The story of our church begins with an encounter between a minister and a family. The story is that a Methodist circuit rider was touring the area in southern Virginia near the North Carolina border. The circuit rider arrived at a place known locally as Taylor's Ferry on the Roanoke River. The circuit rider was ferried across the Roanoke River by a slave named Jack who worked for Colonel Edmund Taylor. The circuit rider asked Jack whether there were any "praying people in the neighborhood." Jack replied by saying that his master and mistress were praying people and that they lived in the first house up the road from the river. The story is that the circuit rider found a warm reception in the home of this land owner named Colonel Taylor. In fact, the Colonel and his wife and the overseer of the plantation and his wife were converted soon thereafter, and became active supporters of Methodism in the area.

There are several different versions of this story. Some say that this circuit rider was Francis Asbury, who went on to become Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church soon to be formed at the Christmas Conference at Baltimore in 1784. Others have suggested that the circuit rider was most likely George Shadford who was known to have travelled in the vicinity some time before Asbury arrived on the scene.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of who it was that first came into contact with the Taylor family, the situation is true to the beginnings of American Methodism. Very often, the seeds of a Methodist "class" or "society" were sown in just such encounters as that between the circuit rider and the slave named Jack and the subsequent meeting of Colonel Taylor and the circuit rider. Methodist circuit riders went forth boldly to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, stopping to preach wherever "praying people" would gather to listen and worship.

The impetus for the spread of Methodism in our area ultimately belongs to John and Charles Wesley. After all, they were the two ministers of the Church of England who, along with George Whitefield and others, began preaching to the industrial workers and miners in England during the late 1730s. The Wesley brothers had struggled very hard to find their own way to salvation. Once they discovered the marvelous fact that they were justified before God because of the merit of Jesus Christ, it seems that nothing could stop them. Soon, John Wesley's organizational genius began to bear fruit. Wesley and his lay preachers began to attract a following of people desiring "to flee the wrath to come." They preached wherever they could get a hearing for their Gospel message. Then, they organized the people in attendance at their meetings into "classes," each class being assigned a leader to supervise the members who were seeking to follow the "Methodist" emphasis on prayer, attendance at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, study of the Bible, fasting, abstinence, and other disciplines of faith.

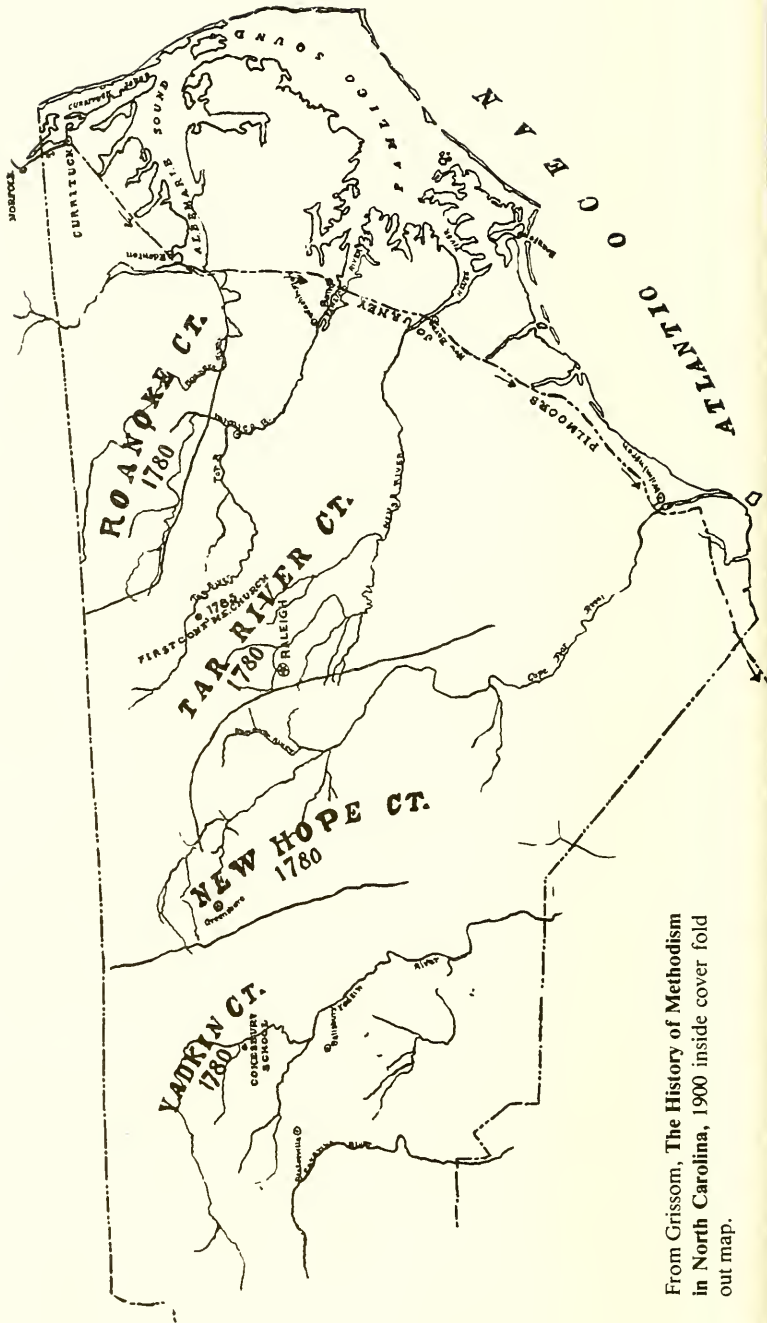
As the movement grew "societies" were organized wherever classes grew to be large. Soon, "the people called Methodist" (a term which was originally a derisive taunt, but which Wesley and his followers adopted), were a

movement of societies united by a common mission to “spread Scriptural holiness across the land.” Wesley met fairly often with his band of lay preachers for “conference.” Decisions were made about the ministries of the movement and clarification was given about how the work was to be done. From the beginning, Methodist efforts were characterized by an emphasis on practicality. The earliest questions to be asked at the conferences were, “What to teach? How to teach? What to do?” They concerned themselves with the substance of the Gospel, proclaiming that Gospel, and putting the Gospel into action, personally and corporately.

Similarly, Wesley and his followers sought to follow basic rules which they believed to flow out of Biblical faith: First, “By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind...” Second, “By doing good in every possible way, and as far as possible to all men...” Third, “By attending upon the ordinances of God...” By the latter, Wesley meant those “disciplines” which served as a means of grace for living the life of Scriptural holiness, seeking to be “perfected in love” by God’s grace. The lay preachers sent out by Wesley had as their resources for ministry: the Bible, Wesley’s *Explanatory Notes On the New Testament*, the “forty-four Sermons” by Wesley, and later the *Book of Discipline*.<sup>2</sup>

Our congregation had its beginning in the context of this movement of Methodism. At first, the society may have gathered in someone’s home. However, when Asbury visited “the Tabernacle” in 1780, there was already a gathering place where some four hundred persons came together to hear him preach. It appears that “the Tabernacle” existed prior to 1780. Certainly, it was considered as a “place long known in the area as a house of Religious Worship.”<sup>3</sup> At first, it was simply a crudely constructed “brush arbor” with sheds on either side for the slaves and animals. Local tradition has it that a log cabin stood at the center of this structure with the sheds spreading out on either side. In those early days, such structures were known as “tabernacles,” thus the name by which our church has come to be known. Beyond these few meager facts, little is known about the earliest days of our church’s history. The rapid expansion of Methodism did not allow much time for record keeping! Also, the fact that our church is located in the “border area” between two states makes it difficult to obtain records from these early days. Soon, however, things would start happening worth remembering. We have a rich story to tell. Let the story begin!





From Grissom, *The History of Methodism in North Carolina*, 1900 inside cover fold out map.



# CHAPTER ONE

## THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN NORTH CAROLINA

### BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

The story of the little Methodist class meeting that began to form around the Tabernacle in the 1780s belongs to a larger story of the spread of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia. In those earliest days of Methodism, the Tabernacle was located within the boundaries of the Roanoke Circuit. This circuit was formed when the spread of Methodism in Virginia reached North Carolina during a revival which spread from Dinwiddie County, Virginia into Halifax County, North Carolina, and thence westward. The Roanoke Circuit, carved out of the large Brunswick (Virginia) circuit, possibly included the present day counties of Vance, Warren, Halifax, Northampton, and Bertie.<sup>1</sup> The circuit roughly followed the Roanoke River eastward encompassing the area north and south of the river from the Virginia border to the Tar River. It must be remembered, however, that there were no strict boundary lines in those days; circuits sometimes changed from year to year and even quarter to quarter as the spread of Methodism continued throughout the land.

Efforts to spread Methodism in this area preceded the Revolutionary War by only a few years. The efforts took two forms: First, some of the lay preachers sent over to America by John Wesley came down into the Southern part of the country. Joseph Pilmore was one of the earliest to come through North Carolina. The following entry from his *Journal* sheds light on the challenges that faced those first circuit riders and the determination with which they faced the challenges:

It is now above a year since I left this City; I set out with a consciousness of duty, and was determined to obey what to me was a Call from above. I was totally unacquainted with the people, the road, and everything else, only I knew where there were multitudes of souls scattered through vast extent of country and was willing to encounter any difficulty, and undergo the greatest hardships, so I might win them to Christ. My plan was to following the leadings of Providence, and go wherever the "tutelary cloud" should direct. With this view I turned my face to the South and went forward above a thousand miles through the Provinces, visited most of the Towns between Philadelphia and Savannah in Georgia, where I have preached the Gospel of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

We do not believe that Pilmore stopped at the Tabernacle, but he is known to have stopped at several other places that later formed societies in North Carolina.

A second way in which the spread of Methodism took place in this area is owed to an Episcopal clergyman, the Reverend Devereaux Jarratt. The Reverend Jarratt became pastor of the Bath Parish in Dinwiddie County,

Virginia in 1763. Jarratt was very much like the Methodists in his evangelical zeal and religious fervor. In 1770, a revival began under his preaching. By 1772, the revival spread to some fifty or sixty miles away. Before it had run its course the revival had spread throughout southern Virginia and on into North Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

When another of Wesley's lay preachers sent over from England, Robert Williams, arrived in the area in 1773, he visited the Reverend Jarratt and discovered that the revival fires were already burning in this area. With Jarratt's encouragement, Williams began to preach in southern Virginia and eventually in North Carolina as well. Some think that Williams may have formed the first society in North Carolina in 1773. We cannot be sure, but there is abundant evidence that Williams had been working in North Carolina at least by 1774, when he undertook a journey from Petersburg to the south of the Roanoke River some distance into North Carolina.<sup>4</sup>

During the following year, the Reverend Thomas Rankin, an ordained minister sent over by Wesley to America, arrived in the area and travelled in Southern Virginia and North Carolina with the Reverend Jarratt. In his *Journal*, Rankin recorded that on July 23rd,

I crossed the Roanoke River, and preached at a chapel in North Carolina, and I preached every day to very large and deeply attentive congregations; although not without much labor and pain, through the extreme heat of the weather.

On Tuesday, 30th, was our quarterly meeting. I scarce ever remember such a season. No chapel or preaching place in Virginia would have contained one-third of the congregation. Our friends, knowing this, had contrived to shade with boughs of trees a space that would contain two or three thousand people. Under this, wholly screened from the rays of the sun, we held our general love feast. It began between eight and nine on Wednesday morning, and continued till noon. Many testified that they had redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins. And many were enabled to declare that it had cleansed them from all sin. So clear, so full, so strong was their testimony, that while some were speaking their experience hundreds were in tears, and others vehemently crying to God for pardon or holiness.<sup>5</sup>

We are not at all sure of the location of this quarterly meeting in 1775. Most likely, it took place somewhere to the east of "the Tabernacle," possibly in Halifax County. However, it does illustrate in a striking way how "the Tabernacle" originated. During this time of revival and the spread of Methodism, "brush-arbors," some temporary, others more permanent, were thrown up on either side of the border between North Carolina and Virginia. This account also tells us a great deal about the character of Methodist piety in those early days in North Carolina. The concern was with salvation. The desire was full redemption from sins. The hope was holiness of heart and life.

Williams had planned a new circuit for this area north and south of the border between North Carolina and Virginia to be called the Brunswick Circuit. After 1774, Robert Williams' work would be continued by others since he left the circuit riding ministry for others to perform and "located" between Suffolk and Norfolk, Virginia, where he died September 26, 1775. During this short period of time, Williams and his co-workers accomplished a great deal. In 1775 three preachers were assigned to this area: John King (a medical doctor from a prominent family in England sent over to America by Wesley), John Wade and Isaac Rollins. The revival continued to thrive under the ministrations of these lay preachers. During the year about six hundred members were added to the Society on the circuit.<sup>6</sup>

Sometime during the period of time between 1777 and 1779, the Brunswick Circuit was divided into three circuits: Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope. Freeborn Garrettson, the circuit riding preacher who would later ride from Georgia to New England summoning the Methodist preachers to the Christmas Conference of 1784 in Baltimore, was riding the Brunswick Circuit in 1777. He refers to the Roanoke Circuit in September of that year as being a place where he was well received, having been as he put it, "sweetly drawn out in the glorious work." Perhaps one of the reasons that Garrettson felt so good about the Roanoke Circuit was because of the reception he experienced at the home of Colonel Edmund Taylor, who lived on the south side of the Roanoke River. Garrettson recorded in his *Journal* that on the evening he stayed in the Taylor home on June 12, 1777, "We held a watch night.....The word was blessed to the Colonel and his family, and they treated me ever more like a son than a stranger...."<sup>8</sup>

### DURING THE REVOLUTION

Not all circuit riders would be so welcomed in the years to come. Indeed, Garrettson himself would be beaten and persecuted in Maryland during the Revolutionary War for being a Methodist and for refusing to bear arms. In many areas of the country, the spread of Methodism was interrupted or halted altogether by the War of Independence being fought by the colonists against England. By 1779 the effects of the war were being felt by all Americans, and the Methodists who were Americans felt it most acutely. As one young man on the Roanoke Circuit expressed it, 1779 was "a year of distress and uncommon troubles. The war on one hand and persecution on the other, the preachers were separated from their flocks, and all conspired to increase the burden of Christians."<sup>9</sup> This young man's story illustrates the difficulties of many Methodist Christians on the Roanoke Circuit during the Revolutionary War.

Jesse Lee had been converted under the ministry of Robert Williams on the Brunswick Circuit in 1774 when he was living with his family in Southern Virginia. At the time he was converted, Jesse Lee was sixteen years old. A few years later, Jesse went to North Carolina to live. There Jesse became involved in a Methodist class meeting. In 1778, the circuit rider assigned to the Roanoke Circuit, William Glendenning, appointed Jesse to be class leader of

the class meeting in his area on the Roanoke Circuit. Jesse worked as a laborer by day and read and studied by night as the Revolutionary War heated in intensity. By the summer of 1780, Jesse found himself in a difficult position, when he received notice of the draft of all young male colonists. Jesse was 22 at the time. The previous year, he had preached his first sermon at the "Old Barn" on the Roanoke Circuit on September 17, 1779. The preacher who had been appointed to the Roanoke Circuit in 1779, John Dickins, had asked young Jesse to take his place for a few weeks while he attended to other matters. Jesse preached several times during the fall until Dickins returned. Then Jesse returned to his work and began to struggle with whether or not God was calling him to serve as a Methodist preacher.<sup>10</sup>

It was in the midst of his struggle with his "call" that the summons arrived for him to report to the army encamped near Raleigh, North Carolina. Jesse recorded his struggle in his *Journal*:

I weighed the matter over and over again, but my mind was settled; as a Christian and as a preacher of the gospel, I could not fight. I could not reconcile myself to it to bear arms, or to kill one of my fellow creatures; however, I determined to go, and to trust in the Lord; and accordingly prepared for my journey.<sup>11</sup>

Jesse reported to the army encampment on July 29th. When he arrived, he was soon met by the sergeant of the regiment. The sergeant offered him a gun as part of his equipment. Jesse refused to take it. Then the lieutenant came by and tried to get him to take his gun. Again, Jesse refused. The lieutenant brought the colonel of the regiment to talk to Lee. Despite all the colonel's arguments, Lee refused to bear arms. Lee was put under guard for refusing arms.

That night, numerous persons tried to persuade Jesse to yield and take up arms. As he recorded,

Many of the people came and talked with me and pitied me, and would leave me with tears in their eyes....After dark I told the guard we must pray before we slept; and having a Baptist under guard, I asked him to pray, which he did. I then told the people if they would come out early in the morning, I would pray with them. I felt remarkably happy in God under all my trouble, and did not doubt but that I should be delivered in due time....I slept pretty well that night which was the first and last night I was ever under guard.

Sunday, 30th — As soon as it was light, I was up and began to sing, and some hundreds of people soon assembled and joined with me, and we made the plantation ring with songs of Zion. We kneeled down and prayed and while I was praying, my soul was happy in God, and I wept much and prayed aloud, and many of the poor soldiers also wept. I do not think that I ever felt more willing to suffer for the sake of a religion than I did at that time.<sup>12</sup>



The next day Jesse and the Colonel of the regiment reached an agreement or compromise. Jesse would help the regimental cook drive his wagon and work with the cook. In return for this contribution, Lee would not be expected to bear arms. In addition to these duties, Lee also preached to the soldiers, becoming something of an informal chaplain to the regiment. That night, Lee preached a sermon to the encampment near Raleigh, North Carolina. Lee would stay with the regiment on into the fall, despite illness, until October 29th, when he was discharged. Throughout this experience, Lee held to his principles and came out of his stint with the army with a clear conscience, having never killed a single human being.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, not everyone on the Roanoke Circuit chose the course of action adopted by Jesse Lee. Some did fight in the war effort. The Revolutionary War interrupted the work of Methodism in North Carolina till sometime in 1783, when once again we learn of signs of life on the Roanoke Circuit.

### AFTER THE REVOLUTION

After his stint with the army, Jesse Lee returned home to work and continue his struggle with the idea of becoming a Methodist minister. By 1783, Jesse Lee consented to taking an appointment as a Methodist circuit rider. At the conference held at Ellis' Meeting House on May 7, 1783, Jesse Lee was appointed to serve the Caswell Circuit in North Carolina. After making the necessary arrangements with relatives, Jesse set off to begin serving this circuit. He arrived only to discover very soon that another preacher had previously been appointed to this circuit recently created from other circuits. After a brief trial, it was felt that one of the preachers should go somewhere else to serve. Since Jesse was the "junior preacher" on the circuit, he was sent to travel the Amelia Circuit in Virginia.<sup>14</sup> After only three weeks on the Caswell circuit, Jesse visited a number of churches on the Roanoke Circuit, soon joining John Easter, the minister assigned to that circuit. Lee and Easter preached their way toward Virginia traveling from Whitaker's Chapel in Halifax County, across Warren County, and into Granville (what is now Vance) County.

Jesse Lee and John Easter arrived at "the Tabernacle" on the Roanoke Circuit in time for the quarterly meeting of the circuit on August 16th and 17th. Lee recorded in his Journal the events of those two days:

The first day we had two sermons, and the next day we had a lively love feast. Then I preached. J.O. Kelly preached and J. Easter exhorted. It was indeed a day of the Lord's power, and many souls were comforted. One young man was awakened by the sermon which I preached, who afterward became a traveling preacher.

At this quarterly meeting the preachers concluded that it would be best for me to go to Amelia Circuit in Virginia, and fill the place of a preacher that could not travel any longer. I willingly consented; I crossed the Roan Oak River to T. Jones', and tarried all night. The next day I parted with

several of the preachers, and set off to my father's where I arrived safely on Wednesday afternoon.<sup>15</sup>

The young man "awakened" by the sermon of Jesse Lee was Mark Moore. Mark Moore later entered the itineracy in 1786, traveled the Salisbury Circuit in 1787, and located in 1799.<sup>16</sup> Moore would appear to be the first person from Tabernacle Church to enter the ministry. We cannot be sure of this since we do not know if he was from the area or simply present for the meeting of the Roanoke Circuit quarterly meeting. The "T. Jones" referred to in this account is no doubt Mr. Tignal Jones who lived about two miles outside of Boydton, Virginia on the road leading from Taylor's Ferry to Boydton.

Through the story of Jesse Lee's experience, it is possible to see how the spread of Methodism affected the lives of people in North Carolina in the area encompassed by the Roanoke Circuit. First, a preacher comes by who gathers anyone who will listen to him as he proclaims the gospel and leads in prayer. Among those gathered to hear the circuit rider is a young man of sixteen who hears the gospel as "good news" and is converted. Some years later, another circuit rider comes to the community where the young man is now living. This circuit rider appoints the young man to be the "class leader" of the class meeting on the Roanoke Circuit. World events send this young man off to war even though his Christian commitment will not let him bear arms in that war. Instead, he drives a wagon, conducts worship services for the soldiers, helping others to receive the Gospel all the while wondering whether or not God is calling him to the ministry of the itinerant ministry. As the war winds down, this young man decides to enter the traveling ministry of Methodism. Just as he is getting started, circumstances send him away from his circuit. On his way to serve **another** circuit, he **happens** to preach at a place like the Tabernacle where another young man like himself is present. This young man is converted. Several years go by and this second young man also becomes a circuit rider. And so the cycle of proclamation and response continues in the lives of lay persons and clergy alike down to this very day. Methodist people carry the transforming news of the Gospel wherever the tides of life's circumstances take them. That which they carry transforms them as they bear "good news" to the nations and spread "Scriptural holiness across the land."

# CHAPTER TWO

## THE TAYLOR FAMILY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF "THE TABERNACLE"

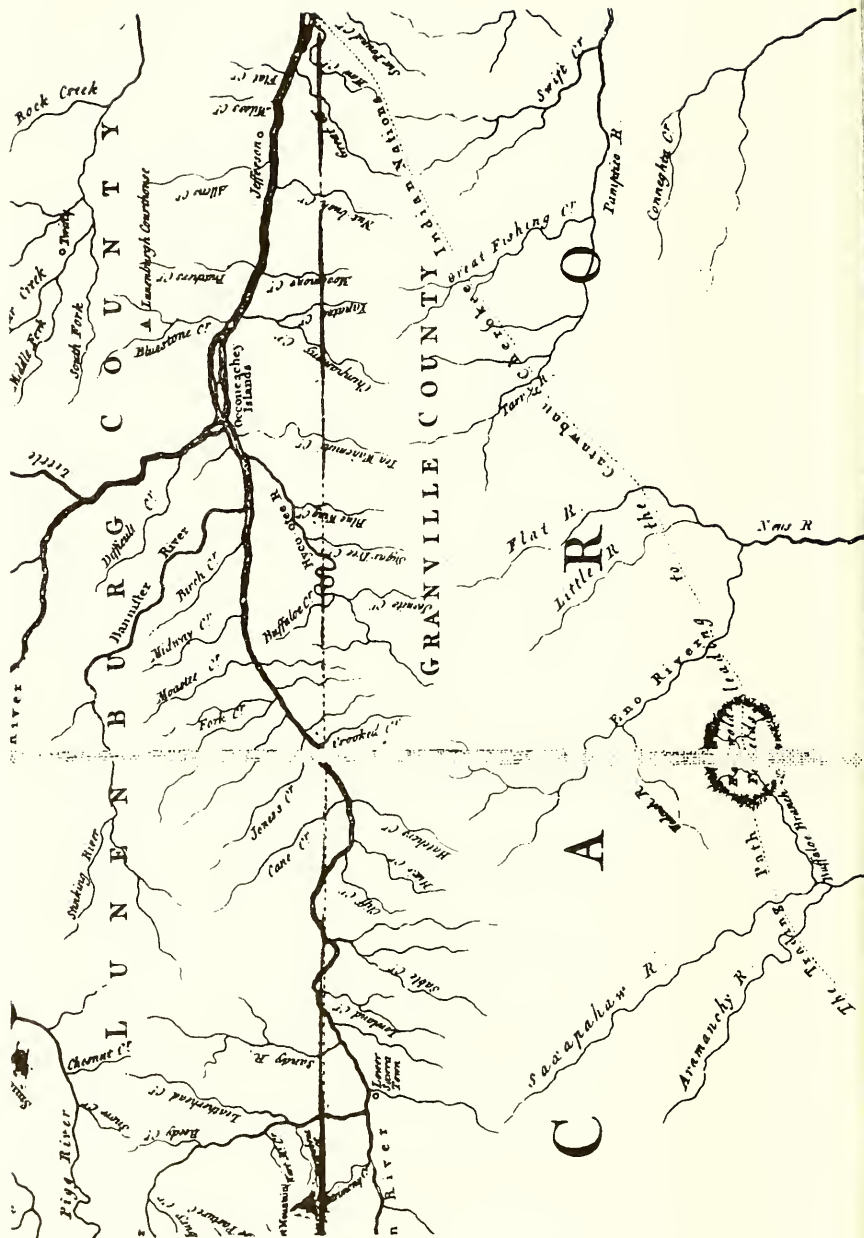
Between the times the circuit rider made his rounds on the circuit, the "societies" of Methodist people were held together by dedicated lay people. A class leader would call the people together regularly to pray, read the Scripture, and seek God's will for their lives. In many cases, Methodist societies began with one particular family or clan of families that expressed interest in the work of Methodism. This appears to have been the case at "the Tabernacle." The family of Colonel Edmund Taylor appears to have been quite involved in the spread of Methodism in this area near the border of North Carolina with Virginia. The legendary encounter between Asbury and Colonel Taylor's slave Jack points to the beginnings of a friendship and cooperation between Asbury and the Taylor family that would last more than twenty-five years. The later-to-be Bishop Asbury found the Taylors to be valuable friends and allies in the work of Methodism.

Colonel Edmund Taylor settled with his family on the banks of the Roanoke River in Virginia in 1758. From the beginning, this wealthy planter and landowner appears to have been very active in the life of Mecklenburg County. Colonel Taylor was the first person named to represent Mecklenburg County in the Virginia House of Burgesses for the session of May, 1765. At other times, Taylor served as a Director of the Peace in the Mecklenburg County Court, surveyor of the County, and as one of the two colonels in the County Militia.<sup>1</sup>

Taylor also appears to have been active in the religious life of the county. Being a member of the Church of England (Episcopal), Taylor was elected to serve on the vestry for the newly formed St. James Parish that encompassed Mecklenburg County. Later, Taylor is listed as the person responsible for collecting the "tithables" for the parish in 1776 on the south side of the Roanoke River and again in 1777 for the "middle district" of the parish.<sup>2</sup>

In order to understand why Colonel Taylor and his family were so receptive to a passing Methodist preacher, one has to explore the situation of the Church of England in the American colonies during the middle part of the eighteenth century. Colonies such as that of Virginia were solidly based in English custom in matters civil and ecclesiastical. The formation of counties took place in tandem with the formation of parishes so that the boundaries of a parish would become the boundary of a county and vice-versa. The officers of a parish would many times serve parallel offices in the county structure of government.<sup>3</sup>

Despite having such advantages as these, the "established" Church of England nevertheless was not able to adapt itself to the needs of the colonists as the frontier spread to the south and west of Virginia. Churches or "chapels" were very few in the sparsely settled areas, and there seems to have been a great demand for priests and lay readers in the area of the up-





per Roanoke Valley. It was common in this time of poor roads and few church buildings for services to be performed in individuals' homes. Records from Mecklenburg County Virginia show that readers were paid to "say prayers" (conduct services in the absence of a priest) in 1734-35 "at roan oak" — presumably referring to a large region bordering the Roanoke River.<sup>4</sup>

From a fairly early time, requests were on record for St. Andrew's Parish (originally comprising Brunswick, Mecklenburg and Lunenburg Counties) for more chapels. There seems to have been interminable disputes regarding the location of these chapels within the parish. One of these disputes was taken to the colony's Council in Williamsburg in 1735. This council ruled that two churches should be built — "one on the north side of the Meherrin (river) and one on the south side." Specifications for the construction of these two chapels were issued, but once again the inhabitants objected to the placement of the chapels. In the end, the local vestry appears to have gone ahead with their own plans in defiance of the Council's decision. Out of this situation, the "Roanoke Chapel" or "Roanoke Church" was built, probably four miles west of Allen's Creek at Red Lawn.<sup>5</sup>

By necessity, this church had to serve a large area. Being the only church in the area of southern Virginia, folks had to come to it whether they lived on the south side of the Roanoke River or on the north side. This church, located on the north side of the Roanoke River was the only "established" church available to the colonists in this area until about 1750. As Lunenburg County grew, other churches were built. But the demand never seems to have balanced out with the scarce supply of chapels and priests. Later, St James Parish was formed in the area which would comprise Mecklenburg County. At the last meeting of the vestry of the Cumberland Parish before the formation of the St. James Parish, reference was made to the order to build a "chappel of Ease" on the south side of the the Roanoke "at or near Edward Goalbreaths" (Culbreath), who lived on Grassy Creek. It is known that services were held in the Grassy Creek area for at least six years before this order was given. Nothing definite is known about the date of construction of this church, but it is known that the church was built.<sup>6</sup>

Whenever new churches were deemed necessary, the locations normally chosen were those that were central to the area in question and where readers were already established. In 1756 the vestry paid Thomas Smith for being a reader on Butchers Creek, and at the same meeting ordered the Reverend John Barclay, Thomas Hawkins, and Thomas Anderson to choose a suitable place on which to build a church at Butchers Creek. For some unexplained reason no church was built, and the parishioners continued to be inconvenienced. Three years later, in 1759, 'the Inhabitants of Roanoke and Butchers Creek & C' registered a complaint 'that a great number of Inhabitants in that part are at too great a distance from any place of Divine Worship to give

their attendance'.<sup>7</sup>

This protest prompted the vestry to appoint seven men to investigate into its reasonableness and if they thought the grievance well founded, to pick a location for the church. Finding it to be justified, they chose Tuslin Quarter Spring as a site. A month after the complaint had been noted, Edmund Taylor and Thomas Lanier were ordered to let its building to undertakers (contractors). Specifications for the church were given, but later complications arose once again over the "uncentrical and inconvenient" location of the proposed church. It would appear that the church was never built. The vestry also issued a directive to divide the Cumberland Parish with Taylors Ferry as one of the dividing points to be used in the partion. The outcome of this directive is not known.<sup>8</sup>

What is known, is that in the coming years, resentment and dissatisfaction with England would grow. As these anti-mother country feelings grew, such frustrations as experienced by the colonists on the south side of the Roanoke River were also recalled. Men like Edmund Taylor would remain involved in the life of the newly formed Mecklenburg County, but more and more their allegiance to the established Church of England would grow weaker as they continued to experience frustration in seeking satisfaction from the established church with regard to supplying them with a place to worship and a minister to lead them in their worship. Records from Granville County, North Carolina indicate that a similar situation had developed there. Though there is evidence that Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopal churches or "chapels" had appeared as early as the 1740s, there were few such churches (Nutbush Presbyterian Church of Townsville, and Nutbush Chapel, later St. John's Episcopal Church, Williamsboro being notable examples). By and large, there was a greater need than could be met through the existing structures for establishing churches. Men like Edmund Taylor would, in time, take such matters into their own hands. All these circumstances must have made the encounter with Francis Asbury especially welcome some ten or fifteen years later.

We cannot say for sure exactly when Colonel Taylor and his family became involved with Methodist efforts in the area, but it may have been as early as 1775 when George Shadford was preaching in the Mecklenburg County vicinity. Shadford recorded in his *Journal* that he was turned back at a great river by a great flood of water and came to a large plantation where he asked for lodging. Shadford recalled being kindly received by his hosts, and "after taking refreshment, proposed to preach if a congregation could be had." A messenger was sent out, and many came, "But they were wild as boars." The word took effect, however, in their "rude hearts." Shadford recorded that the planter and his wife were both converted, and a society of sixty or seventy was raised up in the settlement.<sup>9</sup> As with many of the possible connections between the Taylor family and Methodist beginnings at or near the Tabernacle, the location of this plantation is critical. If Shadford was on the south side of the Roanoke River when he encountered this family, then this might offer evidence for the beginnings of the Methodist society



that would become Tabernacle Church. At this point, however, too many details are lacking to make a positive judgment. Too much remains unknown.

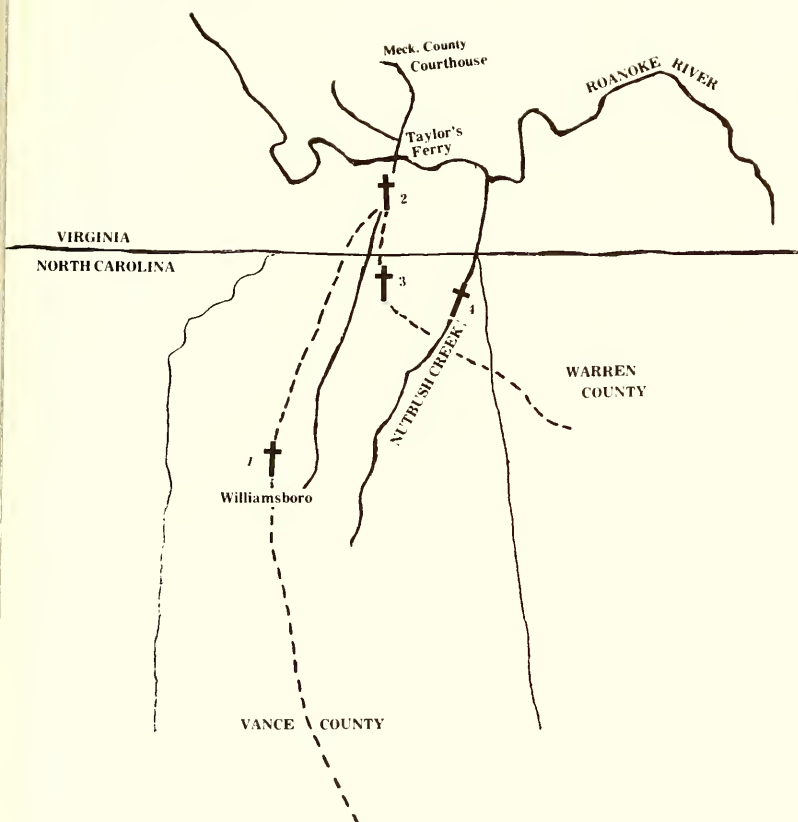
What is known, however, is that in the early summer of 1780, Francis Asbury visited both Edmund Taylor and "the Tabernacle" on his first tour through North Carolina. (See accompanying maps) Asbury entered North Carolina near Roanoke Rapids in Halifax County on the eastern end of the Roanoke Circuit, on June 16. For the next nine days, Asbury preached in meeting houses, chapels, school-houses, barns and homes as he went through the circuit. Having preached in parts of Halifax County, Asbury appears to have gone into Franklin County before heading north again. On Friday, June 23rd, Asbury rode fifteen miles to Nutbush Creek Chapel near presentday Williamsboro.<sup>10</sup> (This Chapel was later moved a mile away to Williamsboro where it was consecrated as an Episcopal Church. Today this church, St. John's Episcopal Church, has been restored to look like it would have looked in 1772.) Friday was the day of fasting, so Asbury did not eat anything till four o'clock in the afternoon, after having ridden most of the day, then preached, prayed and sung for nearly two hours. Asbury records that he preached at Nutbush Creek Chapel to about one hundred and fifty people.<sup>11</sup> In his *Journal* Asbury recorded,

Rode home with Dr. King; his wife was in society. I slept in peace and rose about five o'clock: my heart is with God! Glory be to thee, O Lord! I had too mean an opinion of Carolina; it is a much better country, and the people live much better than I expected from the information given me.<sup>12</sup>

Up until now, students and editors of Asbury's *Journal* have assumed that the description of his itinerary from Nutbush Chapel and Dr. King's home was in the area of presentday Vance County.

The positioning of Colonel Taylor's home has been thought to be on the Tar River in the southern part of Vance County. But this reconstruction does not take into account the fact that the Taylor family did not move to North Carolina until ten years later in 1790-91. Given the account in Asbury's *Journal*, it is also possible to see how Asbury may have ridden north from Dr. King's home to the Taylor plantation on the banks of the Roanoke River in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, then back to the south to the Tabernacle on the next day. This reconstruction not only makes sense of the difficulty of locating where the Taylor home would have been, it also allows for the possibility that while this is the first reference to the Taylor family in Asbury's journal, it may not have been his first meeting with them.

Asbury recorded in his *Journal* the activities of that weekend: Saturday, 24. Though the weather was extremely hot, I yet weak in body, rode to Col. Edmund Taylor's and at the school house spoke to about seventy people, on I Peter iv, 18. Afterward was kindly entertained at Col. Taylor's; they were for the ordinances here, though not heated.



## ITINERARY OF FRANCES ASBURY IN JUNE 1780

### LEGEND

-----Asbury's Route

1. Nutbush Creek Chapel  
(St. John's Episcopal)

June 23

2. Edmund Taylor's Home  
June 24

3. Tabernacle Church  
June 25

4. Brother Reeve's Home



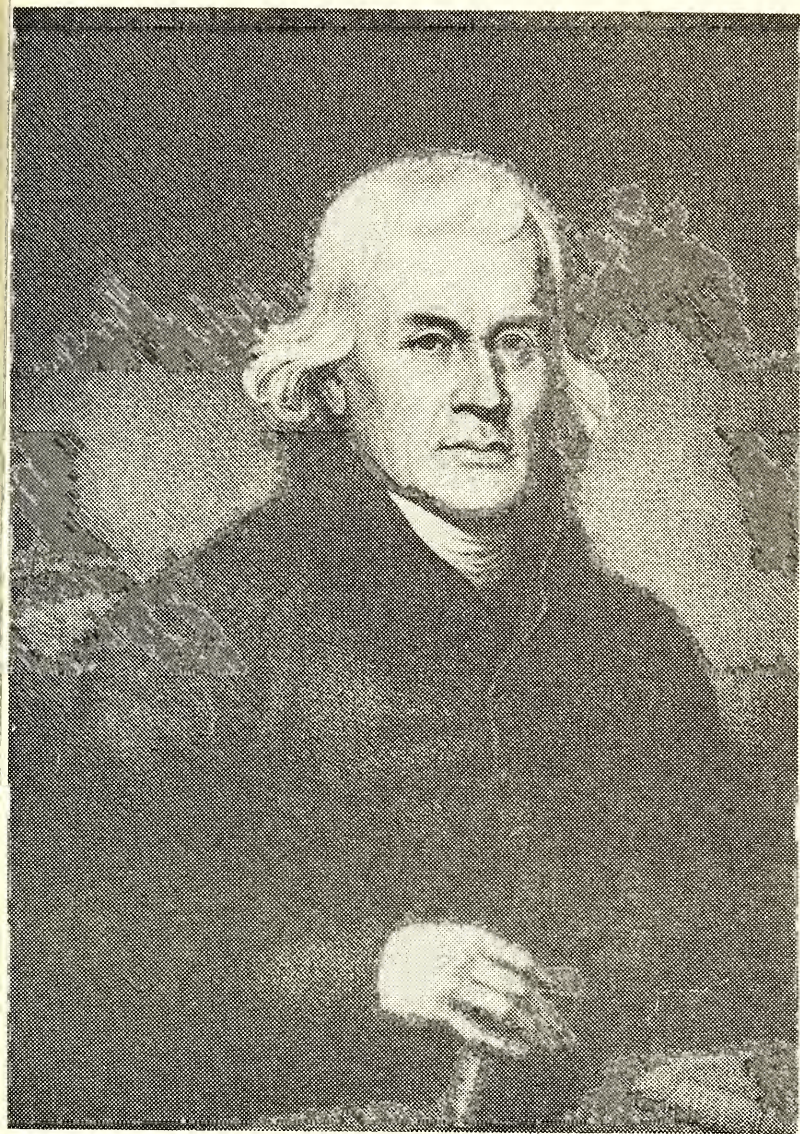
Sunday, 25. Rode six miles to the Tabernacle; about four hundred people, rich and poor, attended; had very little liberty in speaking — the people very insensible. I think these people must be awakened by judgments, for it appears the Gospel will not do it. I spoke near two hours to little purpose; held a love feast; all the friends were stirred up. Then rode eight miles, lodged over Nutbush Creek at brother Reeves's. I am kept in peace, but felt much ashamed for my unfaithfulness.<sup>13</sup>

Some explanation should be given for Asbury's archaic phrases: "ordinances" refers to the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper; "had very little liberty in preaching" means that Asbury was dissatisfied with his sermon or exhortation. As the comments from his *Journal* reveal, Asbury blamed this, in part, on the "insensibility" of the people and, later, on his own "unfaithfulness." When Asbury refers to "four hundred people, rich and poor" he may be referring to the presence of planters and laborers alike or the presence of slaves with their masters. Either way, it would be more than possible that the Colonel and his family rode over to "the Tabernacle" to hear Asbury preach.

What, then, is the connection between the Taylor family and "the Tabernacle?" According to the Taylor family tradition as recorded in that treasure chest of stories about the family, *The Taylors of Tabernacle*, the first encounter with the Taylor family was that of the slave Jack directing Asbury to his master's house as a place in the neighborhood where "praying people" lived. According to this tradition, Asbury visited the family, prayed and conversed with them and left an appointment for preaching.<sup>14</sup> Edmund Taylor and his wife were members of the Church of England at the time, but with the coming of the revolutionary War, their minister had returned to England leaving them with no shepherd.

Mr. Taylor on his own land and with his own means had built a church, but as yet retained the title in himself. When Bishop Asbury made a second visit to meet his appointment, he found that Mr. Taylor and his wife and the overseer and his wife had been converted, all the result of the Bishop's prayers and conversation, and after preaching in the church he formed a society of the four converts. This was the beginning of Methodism in the Taylor family. His church which was called 'Tabernacle' Mr. Taylor deeded to Bishop Asbury for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>15</sup>

At question in this account is not only the date of this particular visit by Asbury but also the fact that the deed referred to has never been found. We can only assume that the deed was never filed at the appropriate registry of deeds. Once again, the fact that Tabernacle is located less than one-half mile from the Virginia state line shows how difficult obtaining records from this



**FRANCIS ASBURY**

**Protrait by John Paradise at New York, 1812. From the steel engraving by B. Tanner, 1814.**

**Reprinted by permission from The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. Abingdon Press, 1958, frontispiece to Vol. I.**



time period really is. Investigation of the deeds on file at Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, North Carolina, during this time period does verify that Colonel Taylor and his brother William owned most of the land on either side of the road leading from Williamsboro to Taylor's Ferry on the Roanoke River, especially in the border area. Early maps of this area locate the road leading from Taylor's Ferry to Williamsboro running near the area where the Tabernacle would have been located, just off the road near the border. Deeds found in Mecklenburg County similarly indicate ownership by the larger Taylor family at this period, including Colonel Edmund Taylor and his son, Howell.

This matter is made more complex, though pleasantly so, because of the other churches or "societies" which the Taylor family appears to have also helped foster during these years. There can be no doubt as to the loyalty of this Taylor family to Methodism!

On the Virginia side of the border area, numerous references to the Taylor family and their in-laws exist. By 1790 or 1791, Colonel Edmund Taylor had moved South to Granville County, North Carolina near the present-day Vance County line some eight or so miles from the Virginia state line and twelve or so miles from Oxford. Earlier, in 1778, Taylor had granted a block of 2300 acres of land on Beech Creek south of the Roanoke River to his son, Howell.<sup>16</sup> The next year Howell married Susannah Young, daughter of Samuel Young. This Samuel Young was the founder of another Methodist church in the area, "Young's Chapel."<sup>17</sup>

In 1790, the Reverend Thomas Ware was travelling through the district which included the Methodist Churches of Mecklenburg County. In his *Journal*, Ware records his impressions of some of the remarkable Methodists he met in this area.

During my labours on this district, I formed an acquaintance with some of the most devoted, holy, zealous, and faithful people I ever knew. Some of them had been called to pass through fiery trials; and their steadfastness was proverbial. A sister Jones, of Mecklenberg, was a remarkable instance of this. She was a person of superior gifts as well as grace; and her courage and perseverance in the service of the Lord constrained all who knew her to acknowledge her deep sincerity.

Her husband cherished the most bitter and inveterate prejudice against the Methodist; and being naturally a man of violent passions and a most ungovernable temper, he by his threats, deterred her, for a time, from joining them. Nor did he stop here, but positively forbade her going to hear them. Soon after this Mr. Easter, a man remarkably owned of God, and a favorite preacher of Mrs. Jones, was to preach in the neighbourhood. Mrs. Jones told her husband she believed it



to be a duty which she owed to God and herself to go and hear Mr. Easter, and begged his permission. But he refused. She then said, she could be compelled, from a sense of obligation to a higher power, to disobey his command. At this, he became enraged, and in a fury, swore, if she did, he would charge his gun and shoot her when she returned. But this tremendous threat did not deter her. During preaching she was remarkably blessed and strengthened; and on her return, met her infuriated husband at the door, with his gun in hand. She accosted him mildly, and said, 'My dear, if you take my life, you must obtain leave of my heavenly Spouse'; and, thus saying, approached him and took the deadly weapon out of his hand, without meeting with any resistance.

This virulent temper God in due time softened and subdued, so that the tiger became a lamb. When on my way to my first quarterly meeting in Mecklenburg in this district, I called upon Mr. Jones, and had the whole history of this transaction from the parties themselves, who now united in one heart in the service of God, accompanied me to the meeting.<sup>18</sup>

The Jones family referred to on this account was, no doubt, the family that Jesse Lee stayed with in 1783 after he preached at the Tabernacle and crossed Taylor's ferry on the Roanoke. The Joneses lived two miles south of Mecklenburg Courthouse near presentday Boydton on the road leading up from Taylor's Ferry going north. Mrs. Jones was well-known in the area as being an inspired and inspiring woman, capable of exhortation and preaching from time to time to the Methodist societies of the border area.

Thomas Ware also recorded a very vivid account of the "quarterly meeting" that he held at which Colonel Edmund Taylor's son, Howell was present.

On Saturday my people attended, and great power was manifested during the public exercises. On Sunday morning the love-feast was appointed to commence at eight o'clock. By seven the house was nearly full, and many were prostrate on the floor; and the surrounding grove was made vocal by the shouts of men, women and children, as they were approaching the house, some of whom were supported on their horses by those who accompanied them. When the house was filled, those who could not get in were engaged in some religious exercises without and numbers were under the trees. A son of Col. Taylor, of Tar River, supported by two men, went about among the people, praising God, and telling them what the Lord had done for his soul, and wherever he came they were melted into tears. His appearance was sufficient to disarm the most stouthearted of them. As to preaching, it was out of the question. Nor did there appear to be any need of it; for all seem to yield to the gracious in-

fluence, and with melting hearts to say, "This is the work of God."<sup>19</sup>

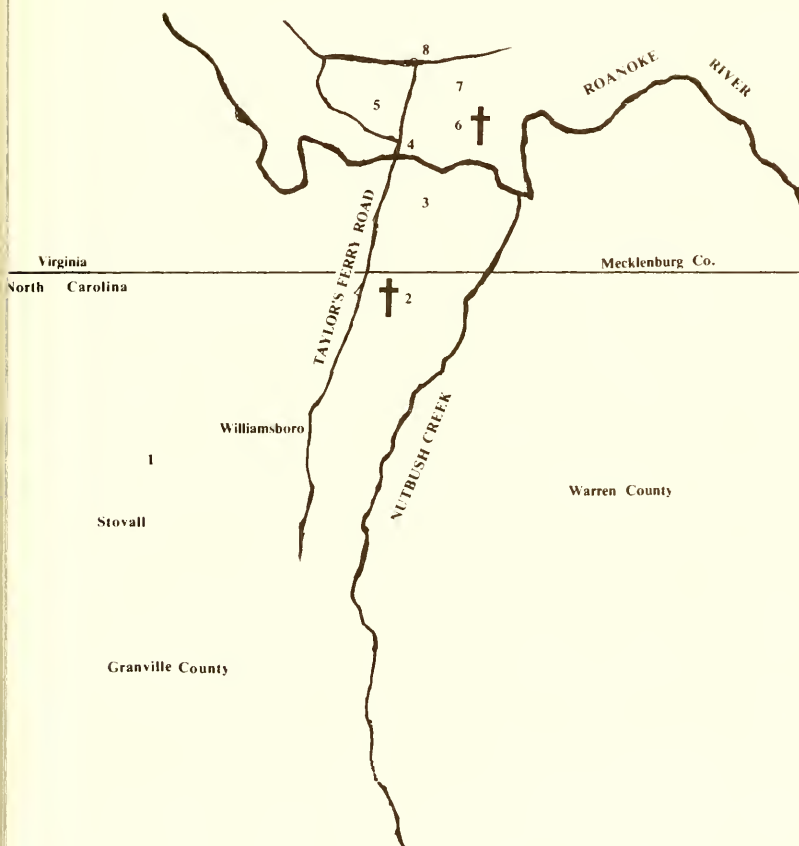
No wonder the non-Methodists in the area wondered at the growth of Methodism! With women like sister Jones speaking in public meetings and men like Howell Taylor testifying to God's love and mercy, Methodism could not help but succeed!

When Bishop Asbury visited the Mecklenburg County area again in 1786, he expressed his approval of Sister Jones and the general health of Methodism in the area in his entry for late March of that year: "We had a gracious time at quarterly meeting, especially at the sacrament: the words of our excellent sister Jones, both in speaking and prayer, were sweetly and powerfully felt. The second day was great, both in preaching and love feast: my soul was melted; I have not witnessed such a meeting in the South."<sup>20</sup> The Bishop seems to have been a frequent guest of the Howell Taylor family and that of Tignal and Sally Jones during his trips through this area. According to Bishop Whatcoat's journal entries for the time, he and Bishop Asbury stayed with the Jones' family in early June, 1790, after crossing the Roanoke River at Taylor's Ferry following a long journey to and from Kentucky.<sup>21</sup>

Bishop Asbury was also a frequent guest of Colonel Edmund Taylor once he had moved to North Carolina. Asbury's *Journal* contains numerous references to visits he made to the Taylor family in North Carolina. It is not always clear however, whether Asbury is referring to Edmund Taylor, Senior or Edmund Taylor, Junior. In some cases, Asbury specifies which, but not in all cases. One such occasion is that of May 29th, 1788, when Asbury visited Edmund Taylor at his North Carolina home in what is now Granville County where he gave a short discourse on "happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help."<sup>22</sup> Edmund Taylor, Junior appears to have lived in Virginia and North Carolina at different times during his father's lifetime. In March of the year 1800, Asbury recorded in his *Journal* that he preached at "Father Taylor's," on Ephesians iv, 3, on "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Asbury thought so much of this particular sermon that he included a full outline of it in his *Journal*.<sup>23</sup> This took place on March 9th.

On March 11th, Asbury came to Edmund Taylor, Junior's home after having visited several other families, the last being "friend Harris," who Asbury noted, lived twelve miles away. The next day, Asbury attended a funeral officiated by Nicholas Snethen at which he also offered some words of eulogy. After staying the night with the Taylor family, Asbury journeyed north, crossing the Roanoke River at Taylor's Ferry, and came to Howell Taylor's home where Nicholas Snethen preached Father Young's funeral<sup>24</sup> (This would be Samuel Young, Howell Taylor's father-in-law and the founder of Young's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church).

Several questions about the locations of these Taylor family homes remain unanswered, but it does appear that by 1800, Howell Taylor was living on the north side of the Roanoke River, probably at the plantation he purchased from William Randolph in 1796, "Bellegrade."<sup>25</sup> Similarly, at least at the



### LEGEND

1. Edmund Taylor's Home 1790 - 1805  
"Longwood" Site of Virginia Conference 1805
2. Tabernacle
3. Howell Taylor's Home
4. Taylor's Ferry
5. Edmund Taylor's Home 1775 - 1790
6. Taylor's Meeting House
7. Tignal Jones' Home
8. Randolph-Macon College 1830
9. Salem Church  
Site of Virginia Conference 1804

time of the journal entry in March 1800, Edmund Taylor, Jr. was living in the northern part of Vance County, possibly at "Lynnesville" (or Townsville as it is now called) near the border with Virginia. Edmund Taylor, Sr., was living at his home near Stovall called "Longwood," located about eight miles from the Virginia state line and some fourteen miles from Oxford in the Northeastern part of Granville County. Taylor had purchased the land from the Penn family. John Penn, one of the persons who signed the Declaration of Independence, was buried at "Longwood." The house once had a room in it called the "preacher's room" because that is where the visiting preachers stayed when they came to visit Colonel Taylor. This room was also where the 1805 Virginia Conference was held.<sup>26</sup>

As these references show, the activities of Methodism and the Taylor family spanned state boundaries. Indeed, it would appear that the flow of people back and forth between Mecklenburg County and presentday area of Vance and Granville Counties was very great indeed. During these early years of the nineteenth century, all the Methodist Episcopal churches in the area would have been part of the Virginia Conference. Thus, in 1804 the Annual Conference of Methodist preachers for the Virginia area took place at Salem Church in Mecklenburg County. Asbury recorded his pleasure at the results of the conference, but noted that there had not been an opportunity for the "preachers' experiences, the state of the work, and the circuits" to be given. Therefore, the conference decided to have a longer session the next year at their appointed place of meeting which was to be the home of Edmund Taylor, Sr., in North Carolina.<sup>27</sup> They set the conference to begin on March 1, 1805. Later in 1804, Asbury records having stopped by the Taylor's home while on a tour of North Carolina. His entry for November 29, 1804 contains the fond remark, "the aged people were happy, waiting with cheerful patience for the moment which was to change this mortal for an immortal state."<sup>28</sup> Colonel Edmund Taylor would have been about 81 years old at that time. Asbury, himself was about 59 years old.

When the time for the 1805 Virginia Conference drew near, Bishop Asbury and Coke were in Southern Virginia. Five days before the conference was to begin, Asbury wrote in his Journal, "We directed our course to Salem, chiefly to see Sister Taylor, at Howell Taylor's: she is true yoke-fellow to Sally Jones: one is gone to rest; the other, confident of God, is suffering on patiently until she is released from her load of painful affliction."<sup>29</sup> (Mrs. Susannah Young Taylor died in 1810). Asbury continued:

On Wednesday we crossed Taylor's Ferry, and rode twenty miles to Edmund Taylor's, the seat of the Virginia Conference; we had rain part of the way. We felt a little serious — thinking our elder children and strong sons would leave us by location; and that we should have none but old tottering men, and green unpractised boys to take care of the plantation; but we have a great husbandman, Jesus, and a good God. On Thursday made preparations for Conference. Friday, March 1. We opened our yearly conference for Virginia

at Edmund Taylor's, Granville County, North Carolina.<sup>30</sup>

Among the business conducted by the conference was the addition of fourteen preachers and the location of four. The year before at Salem Church, one thousand members had been reported added to the Virginia Conference by the travelling preachers. In 1805, Asbury noted that the preachers reported the addition of one thousand nine hundred new members in the Conference area. According to Asbury, the business was conducted "in great peace, and we had preaching as usual."

As this and other references indicate, the Taylor family was, from the earliest days of Methodist beginnings in this area, a hospitable clan ready to host any Methodist gathering that Asbury or his circuit riding preachers should desire to have. As various members moved to the north or south of the Roanoke River, they continued their involvement in Methodism. There are references to a log house that the ministers used at the 1805 Conference at "Longwood" which was a "meeting house" built by Colonel Taylor. This building may have been the predecessor of presentday Marrow's Chapel United Methodist Church near Bullock, North Carolina.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, those Taylors remaining on the north side of the Roanoke River not only appear to have been actively involved at Young's Chapel and Salem, there is also some evidence that they were involved in the birth of what is now Rehobeth United Methodist Church, formerly "Taylor's Chapel", outside of Boydton on the road south toward Taylor's Ferry (a few miles south of where Tignal Jones lived).

Apparently, there were two different churches: both called "Taylor's Meeting House." As late as 1812, John Early, the Methodist Circuit Rider and future bishop, records having visited Mr. Taylor (Howell, Edmund, Jr.?) and the next day preached at Taylor's Old Meeting House.<sup>32</sup> Mecklenburg County historians have long puzzled as to the location of this church. Susan Bracey concludes:

Supposedly, it was located about four miles south of Mecklenburg Courthouse on land that had been deeded by John Winckler in 1811, and was subsequently replaced by Poplar Spring Church now known as Rehobeth. However, Early spoke of Taylor's Old Meeting House in 1812. It would appear that there were two separate Churches — one built at or near the home of Edmund Taylor and one built after March 1811 on the acre on Irish Road that Winckler deeded to Howell Taylor, James Nolley, Samuel Simmons, Samuel Taylor, and Edmund Taylor (Jr.?) as trustees for the Methodist Episcopal Church, which church was the predecessor of Rehobeth Methodist Church,<sup>33</sup> (South of Boydton).

We have not been able to substantiate any connection between the "Tabernacle" that Edmund Taylor, Sr. gave to Bishop Asbury and the "Old Meeting House" built near the home of Edmund Taylor. The two were probably unrelated in origin, though certainly, connections by family and work

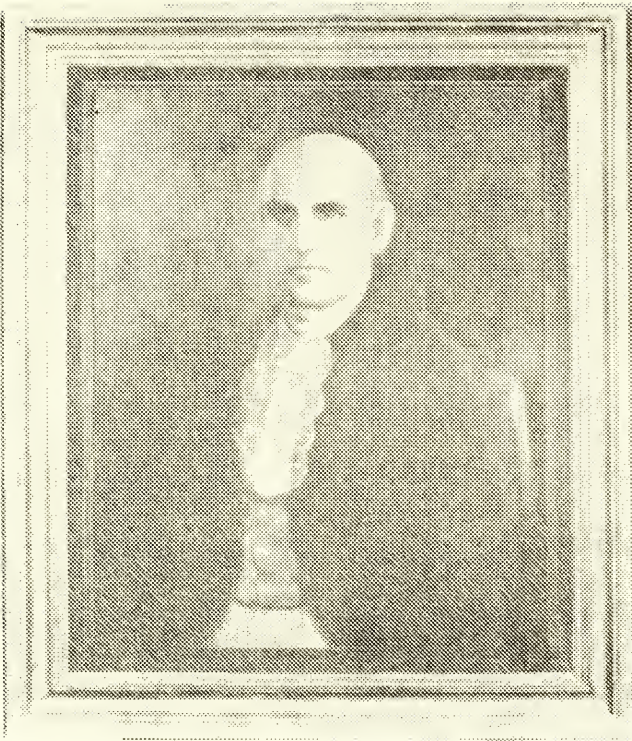


would have been probable.

As late as 1824, Howell Taylor is listed as one of the trustees of a church being formed in the Mecklenburg County area. The land on which Boydton Methodist Church was later built was deeded by John W. Lewis to Howell Taylor, Edmund Taylor, Samuel A. Taylor, the Reverend James Smith and Michael Vaden trustees.<sup>34</sup> (Given the date, the Taylors mentioned probably were Howell, Sr.'s children)

Howell Taylor became a leading figure in the Methodism in this area. So great was Howell Taylor's influence that it is said that the location of Randolph-Macon College at Boydton was owed to his efforts. When Randolph-Macon was organized in 1830, Howell Taylor was named one of the trustees of the college even though he had moved to Tennessee four years before that time. Randolph-Macon College was formed to serve the people living in Virginia and North Carolina. Methodists from both states contributed to its beginning and development in these early years. Randolph-Macon College would later relocate to Ashland, Virginia, but it lays claim to being the oldest<sup>35</sup> incorporated Methodist College in the United States.

Without a doubt, the Taylor family was very prominent in the spread of Methodism in the border area between North Carolina and Virginia. Much remains unknown about how the Taylor family came to be so closely associated with "the Tabernacle" on the Roanoke Circuit in North Carolina. However, one tradition passed down by members of the Taylor family may explain the strength of the association between this family and our church. It is believed that Howell Taylor was converted in 1784 at "the Tabernacle" near his family's home.<sup>36</sup> If this is true, then it may offer still further confirmation of the longstanding tradition of our congregation that the Methodist society was organized at Tabernacle in 1784. The Taylor family also believes that Howell Taylor was converted as a result of the ministrations of Francis Asbury at the Tabernacle. Dating Howell Taylor's conversion in relation to when Francis Asbury was in the area is not possible at present, but all indications point to the fact that no later than 1784 "the Tabernacle" had become a meeting place for a Methodist society in which the Taylor family had significant involvement. The association between the Taylor family and early Methodist leaders would be very fruitful in the years following the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore, Maryland in December 1784.



**Rev. Howell Taylor (1754-1845)**  
**Portrait painted by Joseph Dickinson,**  
**a direct descendant of Rev. Howell Taylor.**

Reprinted with permission from **The Taylors of Tabernacle, Vol. I.**



4D

24

# TABERNACLE

← 1.8 mi. →

This community was settled in 1828 by the Rev. Howell Taylor and his five sons. Haywood County's first schoolhouse was there; it also served as a church. The Taylor Kinfolks Camp Meeting was held here annually for over a century.

PLANNED BY THE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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The Taylors of Tabernacle, Vol. I



# CHAPTER THREE

## THE TAYLORS OF TABERNACLE — TENNESSEE

On March 7th, 1817, Howell Taylor and his two sons, Richard and John Y. Taylor, left Mecklenburg County, Virginia, moving to a community near Clarksville, Tennessee, in Montgomery County. They arrived on April 15th, 1817, and settled some eight to ten miles outside of Clarksville. Later, in 1826, the Taylor clan would move again, this time to Haywood County, Tennessee, near presentday Brownsville. According to the Taylor family history, the wagons had hardly been unloaded before the family was met by two Methodist preachers: Greenbury Garrett and Richard Hutson. As soon as the family could get settled, a log church was built by Richard Taylor in the grove of his new home called "New Hope." Soon after being built, an addition was constructed so that the slaves could worship with the Taylors at Sunday and mid-week services.<sup>1</sup>

Later,

During the year 1832, the second house was built some four hundred yards distant from the house. This one was also of logs, straight and nicely hewn, and when the building as finished it was considered a very nice house for the times. It was built by a union among the members who worshipped there. After the building was completed the name of the church was changes from 'New Hope' to 'Tabernacle' by the Reverend Howell Taylor, because Tabernacle was the name of the church at which he worshipped in Mecklenburg County, Virginia and he loved the name.<sup>2</sup>

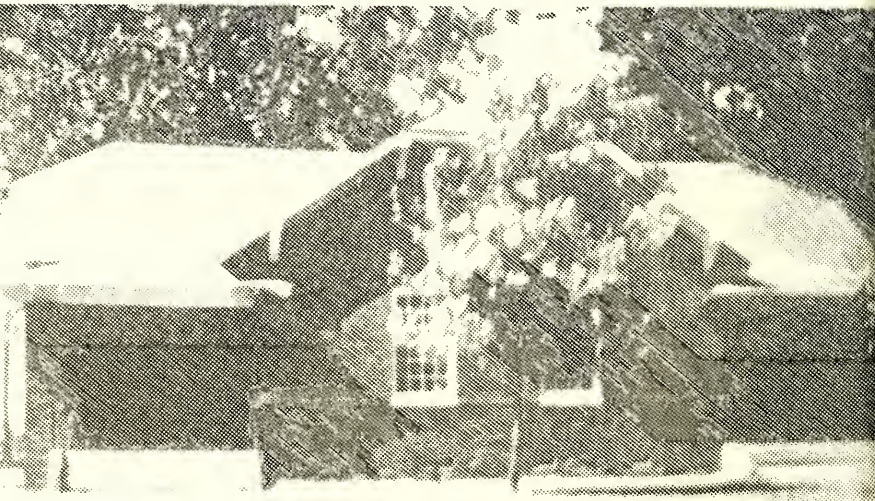
Obviously, the present location of Tabernacle United Methodist Church is in North Carolina. We have no reason to believe that the Tabernacle was ever located in Virginia. The fact that our church is located a mere one-half mile from the state line of Virginia probably accounts for this discrepancy. At the time that Howell Taylor was a resident of Mecklenburg County, the actual border had not been established firmly.

"The Tabernacle" outside of Brownsville, Tennessee was dedicated by the Reverend James Smith, a local preacher from Virginia, in 1832. A third church was built in 1847: "a neat frame church, white with green shutters..." This third building was later remodelled in 1922. Today, this building serves as the house of worship for the congregation of Tabernacle United Methodist Church on the Brownsville Circuit of the Memphis Conference.<sup>3</sup>

When Howell Taylor moved to Tennessee in 1817, he was already a man of some sixty-two years. His sons were men at the middle age of life. After his first wife, Susannah, died in 1810 in Virginia, Mr. Taylor married again. His second wife's name was Rebecca. An early letter dating from June 10th, 1828 from Howell Taylor to his son Edmund, in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, has survived. The letter gives some indication of the kind of life that the Taylor family had found on the frontier of Tennessee.



"Third Church" building of the Tabernacle Methodist Church, Tabernacle, Tennessee, built in 1847. Dedicated by the Reverend Guilford Jones, October 3, 1847.



"Third Church" remodelled, present building of the Tabernacle United Methodist Church, Tabernacle, Tennessee. First service held June 4, 1922.

My very dear Edmund, I have sat down to rite you a few lines and hardly know what to say. Your letter came safe to hand dated May the 8th, which gave me much satisfaction. I am glad to hear from you at all times and especially when you are doing well for soul and body. Polly's youngest child was born on July 9th, 1827. His name is Stephen. You had better set down his age yourself for your satisfaction. I never was better pleased with any country than this. I am moving for many reasons I can give you, rich land, for health, a good range and good society. Money scarce — land cheap from two to four dollars per acre, springs some. John, Richard and myself with good springs. Part of our employment last summer was killing bears, ourselves and company killed 20 last year tho they seem scarce this summer. Richard and Mr. Williams' son killed a great many deer last year. I wish you could see old Cousin Joseph Taylor, he can tell you what he knows about this country and our situation. I am glad report your sister Judith that the sting of death is drawn from her. As she is confined to her home would it not be best to appoint prayer meeting at her home with her consent. I hope we are as much determined to seek the salvation of our souls as we ever were. Oh, let us struggle on my son until we gain the prize where pleasure never dies. Tell Allen that I am thankful to him for his last letter I received from him. He writes he means to stand for old Methodism, so do I my son, God being my helper. Becky joins me in love to you and all of yours, black and white. I am in my seventy-fourth year and never had better health. Your mother says her health is better than it has been in many years. Tell Howell and Mary to come tomorrow to dinner and eat bear meat with me.

This from your father

Howell Taylor<sup>4</sup>

By 1832, Howell Taylor's sons, Edmund, Allen, and Howell, would join their father and two brothers in the family's new home in Tennessee. Several other families from the Granville-Mecklenburg County area also relocated to Tennessee at about this time. Very possibly some of these families may have been part of "the Tabernacle" back in North Carolina before they moved. The growing community outside of Brownsville, Tennessee, would eventually become known as Tabernacle Community. The center of this little community of Taylors and friends was, of course, "the Tabernacle" which lay in a grove of trees at the center of the community's life together. Predictably, the patriarch of this community was Howell Taylor himself. "Father Howell" as the by now aged man was called by everyone was "a patriarch, bald as Elisha, and venerable as he was bald and aged. His eccentricities were all innocent, and as he enjoyed them, no one ever objected to them. He was plain, candid, and outspoken."<sup>5</sup>



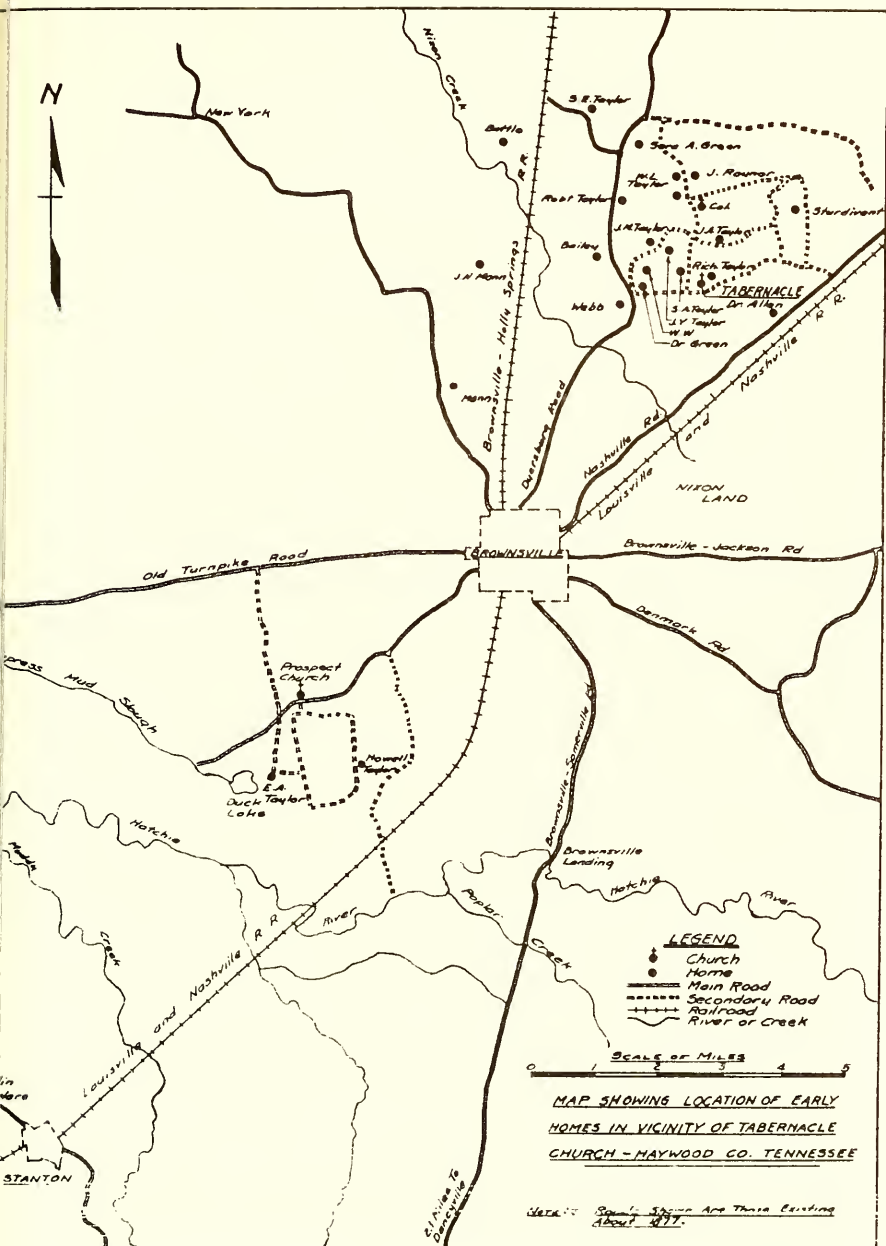
Some of Howell Taylor's eccentricities became the subject of stories:

He had a horror of all secret associations. He made a literal application to all secret societies, of the text, "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil." We had an excellent old gentlemen by the name of Watson, who was a good and zealous preacher and an equally good and zealous Mason. He visited "The Tabernacle" — as their church in the forest was called — and was holding the protracted meeting. From some peculiar expression in the introductory prayer, Father Taylor concluded that Father Watson was a Mason. On rising from his knees, Father Taylor said "Look here, preacher, are you a Mason?" "Yes, brother, I have the honor to belong to that ancient and venerable order." "Well, Just hold on a minute, for I wish to have nothing to do with the Devil and any of his works." With that remark the old patriarch took up his hat and deliberately left the house. Now, he was just as thoroughly convinced that it was his duty to do this, as he was that it was his duty to pray.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly enough, Howell Taylor was "licensed to preach and received deacon's orders, but said that he never felt especially called to preach, except to meet the wants of his community, consequent upon scarcity of preachers, to bury the dead, baptize children, marry people and hold meetings. He was remarkable for originality and independence of character, and for punctuality, diligence and usefulness in the church and in the community generally."

In 1830, after Reverend Taylor's second wife, Rebecca, died, "Father Howell" went to live with his son John Y. Taylor. On May 30th, 1845, "Father Howell" died at ninety years of age. Following the death of Howell Taylor, the little community of Tabernacle began to take steps to ensure that the family traditions would continue. In October 1846, John Y. Taylor made out a deed for Tabernacle Church and a Board of Trustees was established. Later the next year, another son of Howell Taylor named Edmund built another church called "Taylor's Chapel" in nearby Fayette County, Tennessee.<sup>8</sup>

In 1855, Howell Taylor's son, Richard, appointed three ministers to call together the kinsfolk for an annual meeting at Tabernacle Church. This was the beginning of a longstanding tradition — the annual Kinsfolk gathering and camp meeting on the grounds surrounding Tabernacle United Methodist Church. The three ministers appointed to call together the kinsfolk had all been born in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, or Granville County, North Carolina: Thomas Taylor, D.D. (Doctor of Divinity) born in Oxford, North Carolina in 1811; Robert V. Taylor, born in 1822 in Mecklenburg County to Edmund and Elizabeth Taylor (Edmund Jr.); and Joseph J. Somervell born to John Somervell III and his wife, Frances Anderson Taylor, of Berry Hill, Virginia.<sup>9</sup> ("Berry Hill" was located about one mile from the first Tabernacle. Later in the nineteenth century this plantation would be the home of



Map reprinted courtesy of the Tabernacle Historical Committee, Brownsville, Tennessee.

Mr. W.H. Burwell, a member and leader of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Woodworth, North Carolina).

At his death, Richard Taylor was eulogized with the following words:

It was his one heavenly thought of his life to bring the children into the church....He wanted his children's children and the children of his neighbors converted and brought into the Church to the remotest generation. To this end these services were instituted.<sup>10</sup>

The place of the annual camp meeting was to become central in the life of Tabernacle Church during the next one hundred and more years. The church has had a number of persons enter the ordained ministry in the Methodist Episcopal Church and its successor denominations. One of the earliest of these ministers to come out of Tabernacle Church was Robert V. Taylor, born in Virginia, the son of Edmund Taylor, Jr. and the grandson of Colonel Edmund Taylor, the man who offered Bishop Francis Asbury his home and church for use by the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Colonel Taylor could not have known the extent to which he would also give his family for use in spreading Methodism through the states of Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.



# CHAPTER FOUR

## AN ERA OF MANY CHANGES

### THE ROANOKE CIRCUIT: 1779-1821 (?)

Much remains unknown about what happened in those early years of the Methodist society that formed at "the Tabernacle," after Francis Asbury's original visit in 1780. What is known is just enough to tantalize the inquisitive and curious. Certainly, the very fact that a "quarterly meeting" was held at the Tabernacle in August of 1783 tells us something about the level of activity of Methodists in this area. These meetings, held approximately once per each quarter of the year were multipurposed occasions. As Jesse Lee's account of the quarterly meeting at "the Tabernacle" indicates, activities would include preaching, a love feast, and other worship services including the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism.<sup>1</sup> The person or persons assigned to the circuit would be present along with other ministers from nearby circuits. For example, in 1783, John Easter was assigned to the Roanoke Circuit along with William Damaron. James O'Kelly was assigned to the Brunswick Circuit, which would still have taken in a large area in southern Virginia in the general vicinity of Brunswick and Mecklenburg Counties. As mentioned in Chapter One, in 1783, Jesse Lee had been assigned to the Caswell Circuit west and south of "the Tabernacle" near present day Burlington, North Carolina.

When three ministers gathered at "the Tabernacle" on August 16-17, 1783, for this quarterly meeting, the entire circuit had some 450 or so members, black and white<sup>2</sup>. The pastor in charge of the circuit would have heard reports concerning the health of the various "societies" on the circuit, made appointments for holding services at various homes or chapels in the area, and saw to matters of order and discipline. Since "the Tabernacle" was on the western edge of the circuit, other "quarterly meetings" might be held somewhere to the east of "the Tabernacle" at other times during that year.

Actually, it is difficult to say with absolute certainty exactly how the quarterly meetings were conducted in these early days of Methodism. Given the widespread nature of the movement of Methodism in America, significant local variance would no doubt have been present. Certainly, decisions that could not be deferred to the next "conference" of preachers would be made. An example of this is offered in Lee's account of what took place at the August, 1783 quarterly meeting when the preachers decided that it was a good idea for him to head north to the Amelia Circuit, even though he had been assigned earlier to the Caswell Circuit at the preceding conference of preachers.

Given the fact that Asbury preached at "the Tabernacle" in June, 1780, it is likely that our church goes back to the very beginnings of the Roanoke Circuit, if it does not actually predate those beginnings. The minutes of the Virginia Conference for 1779 indicate that the Roanoke Circuit had 470 members and that John Dickins and Henry Willis were appointed to the cir-

cuit for the coming year. As noted in Chapter One, Robert Williams, Freeborn Garrettson and William Glendenning were among the first Methodist preachers to travel in this area during the years following 1773. In fact, Garrettson refers to the Roanoke (or Roan Oak) Circuit in a journal entry for 1777. Glendenning may have been the first circuit rider actually appointed to the Roanoke Circuit, but certainly by 1779, we know John Dickins and Henry Willis were making regular rounds on the circuit. This was also the year when Dickens asked Jesse Lee, one of the "class leaders" on the Roanoke Circuit, to take his place on the circuit for a time that fall.

At the session of Conference in 1780, Dickins was re-appointed to the Roanoke Circuit and Henry Ogburn (a preacher from Mecklenburg County, Virginia) was appointed to assist Dickens. They were both re-appointed in 1781. In 1782, James Martin and Thomas Foster were appointed to the Roanoke Circuit, followed by John Easter (also of Mecklenburg County, Virginia) and William Damaron in 1783. In 1784, when our local tradition has it that Tabernacle was established as a congregation in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Thomas Curtis and David Jefferson were listed as the preachers assigned to this circuit. Throughout this period of time, the total membership of the circuit numbered between 450 and 495 members.

One feature of the method of employing ministers during this time period that makes it even more difficult to say who, in particular, was the pastor of Tabernacle Church as part of the Roanoke Circuit is the fact that sometimes the ministers were directed to "change among themselves" after one or two quarters. For example, in 1782, the minutes of the Virginia Conference direct that the preachers assigned to the Roanoke, Tar River, and New Hope Circuits were to "change among themselves" after six months, meaning that some sort of regular rotation was understood to be helpful in conducting the ministry of Methodism during that era.

#### **THE GRANVILLE CIRCUIT: 1821-1837 (?)**

Because of the practice of keeping records by circuit and not by "society" or congregation in the early days of Methodism, it is very difficult to say which circuit a church was on at any given time. While geography is one good clue, it is not always accurate in predicting the circuit a church was on. Circuits frequently changed or were altered according to the practical concerns that came up from quarter to quarter and year to year in the spread of Methodism. In the same way as the Roanoke Circuit was created from the larger Brunswick Circuit in Virginia in the years 1777 to 1779, so also did the Roanoke Circuit eventually divide into smaller circuits. While the Roanoke Circuit is listed in the minutes of the Virginia Conference up until 1820, it is not possible to say for sure whether Tabernacle remained part of the Roanoke Circuit from 1780 until 1820. Fluctuations in membership figures for the circuit during these years could indicate that "societies" were added or taken away as new circuits were formed.

In the case of Tabernacle, matters are made somewhat more difficult in that Tabernacle would have been at a point where **three different** circuits

converged in those earliest days of the spread of Methodism. On the western edge of the Roanoke Circuit, Tabernacle would have been very close to the Tar River Circuit boundary and just south of the Brunswick (still later the Mecklenburg Circuit) in Virginia.

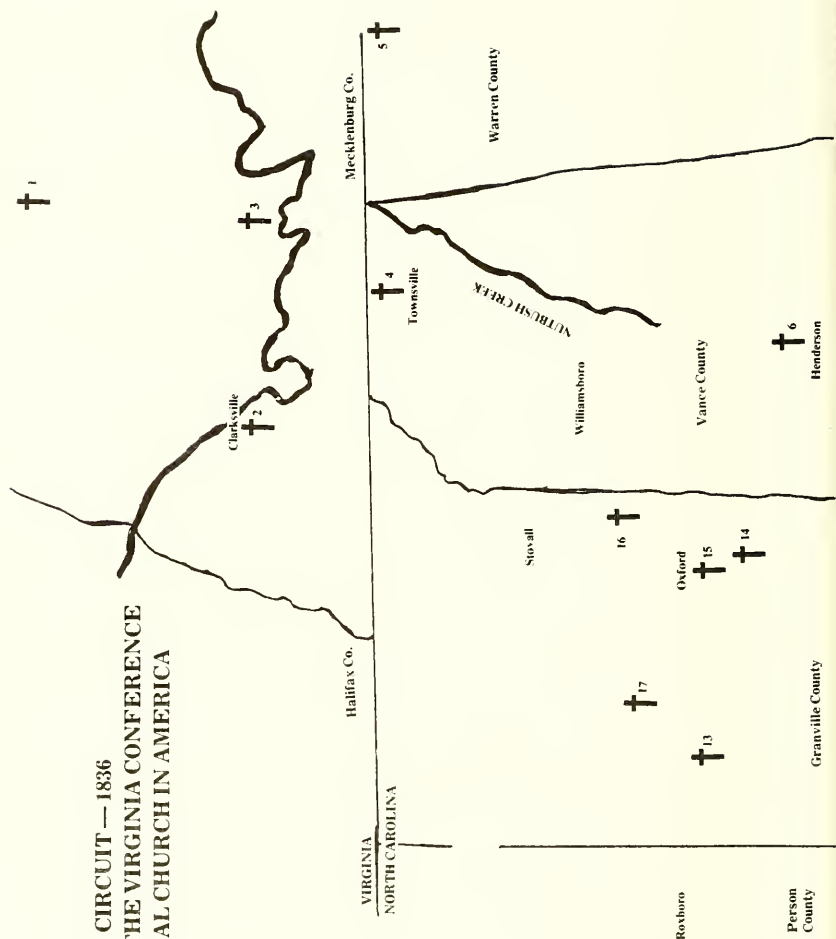
We do know, however, that as late as 1836, Tabernacle was listed among the churches of the Granville Circuit of the Danville District of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Granville Circuit itself covered a wide area. The Granville Circuit appears for the first time in the minutes of the Virginia Conference in 1821, the same year that the Roanoke Circuit **disappears** from the minutes of the Conference. Thus, it is possible that Tabernacle was part of the Roanoke Circuit from 1779 until 1821 at which time it became part of the Granville Circuit.<sup>3</sup> This reconstruction, however, could be subject to any number of changes in the arrangement of the circuits in this area of which we may not be aware.

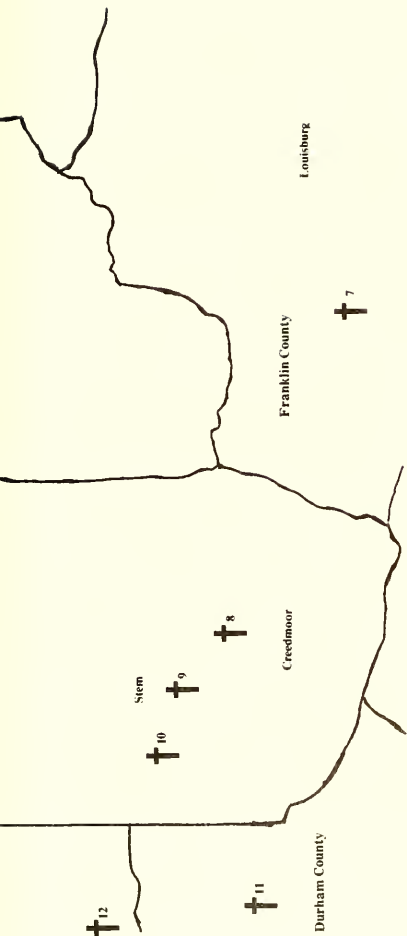
Charles Chesley was listed as the person appointed to travel the Granville Circuit in 1821. In 1822, Charles Cooley is listed as the preacher for the circuit with Lewis Skidmore being the "presiding elder" of the Yadkin District.\* Skidmore would preside over the Yadkin District until 1826. In 1823, Peter Doub and John Craig were appointed to the Granville Circuit. In 1824, Doub was re-appointed to the circuit by himself. In 1825, William Compton and John Panabaker were appointed to the circuit. Then in 1826, Peter Doub was made the presiding elder over the Yadkin District with George W. Nolly and John H. Watson appointed to serve the Granville Circuit. In 1827, James H. Dunahay was appointed to serve the circuit.

From 1828 to 1836, the Granville Circuit was at various times part of three different districts in the Virginia Conference: Roanoke, Yadkin, and Danville. In 1828, 664 white and 68 black members were listed in the conference minutes for the Granville Circuit. That same year, Henry Alley and Stephen W. Jones were appointed to serve the circuit. In 1829, Alley was returned to the circuit with George Gregory. In 1830, T.R. Brame and J. Jamieson were appointed to serve the Granville Circuit. In 1831, Jamieson was returned to the circuit with George W. Dye. In 1832, Jamieson was returned to the circuit for a **third** year with William Holmes. Benjamin Kidd was appointed to the circuit in 1833. That year, the conference records show that the Granville Circuit had 718 white and 82 black members. But the very next year, 1834, the conference records show 494 white and 85 black members. Such a significant drop in membership may suggest that some churches were taken from the circuit to form another circuit. That same year, a young man named Robert O. Burton was appointed to serve the Granville Circuit (Burton would serve circuits in which Tabernacle was located **three more** times before he retired.)

\* A presiding elder was a minister who conducted quarterly meetings and advised the Bishop of a conference in making appointments to the various circuits. In addition, the presiding elder often preached at places on the circuits within his district. Today, presiding elders are called "district superintendents."

GRANVILLE CIRCUIT — 1836  
 DANVILLE DISTRICT OF THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE  
 METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN AMERICA





### GRANVILLE CIRCUIT LEGEND

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Pisgah (Easter's Chapel)                          | 9. Moore's     |
| 2. Clarksville                                       | 10. Roberts    |
| 3. Poplar Springs (Rehobeth, Taylor's Meeting House) | 11. Mt. Bethel |
| 4. Tabernacle  | 12. Mt. Tirzah |
| 5. Bethlehem   | 13. Burgis     |
| 6. Rockspring  | 14. Bethel     |
| 7. Ebenezer  | 15. Oxford     |
| 8. Bullocks  | 16. Salem      |
|  | 17. Trinity    |

(County lines added for ease in locating the churches. These would not have been the actual county lines in 1836.)

H.T. Weatherly was appointed to serve the Granville Circuit at the 1836 Virginia Conference session. James M'Aden was appointed presiding elder of the Danville District that year. Weatherly was reappointed in 1836. At the 1837 Virginia Conference, the membership of the Granville Circuit was listed as being 569 white and 50 black members. This was the last year that the Granville Circuit is listed in the Virginia Conference minutes, the reason for this being that during 1837, the North Carolina Conference was formed. The first session of the North Carolina Conference was held in 1837, at Petersburg, Virginia.

#### **TABERNACLE SOCIETY: 1836**

In such circumstances as the frequent itineration of ministers among the circuits, continuity, if it was present at all in a "society" or congregation had to be supplied by lay leadership. Following the exodus of the Taylor family and other families from this area in the 1820s for the frontier of Tennessee other families would have to provide the kind of leadership we might suspect someone like Howell Taylor might have given to the churches in this area. Given the scarcity of church records from this period, however, it is not possible to identify these leaders until 1836.

In that year, we discover that Tabernacle was listed among the churches of the Granville Circuit in the Danville District of the Virginia Conference. In 1836 this circuit contained some seventeen churches. Three were in Virginia: Pisgah (Easter's Chapel), Clarksville, and Poplar Spring (also known as Rehobeth later, and earlier as Taylor's Chapel). The other fourteen churches were all in North Carolina in the area encompassing present day Granville County and the adjacent counties of Durham, Person, Franklin and Vance. The churches were as follows: Rockspring (later Henderson Station), Salem, Oxford, Bethel, Burges, Bullocks, Moors, Roberts, Mt. Bethel, Mt. Tirzah, Bethlehem, Trinity, Ebenezer, and Tabernacle.

The record book for the circuit for that year has a listing of the names of members from every church on the circuit. According to this set of records Tabernacle had forty-eight members in 1836. The total number of members of the seventeen congregations on the circuit for that year is recorded in the minute for the Virginia Conference as 575. According to the records listed in the circuit records for each church, Tabernacle would appear to have been one of the two largest congregations on the circuit (Mt. Tirzah, near present day Roxboro being the largest).

Copy of membership roll on facing page re-printed from "Church Books for Granville Circuit" 1836 from the Francis B. Hays Collection. Vol. 135. Richard P. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, North Carolina.



# Table made

Anthony Dale L.P. & L.  
 Wm. Somerswell H.  
 Wm. Hargrove  
 Benjamin Hyflin  
 Jas. M. Williams  
 James Lewis  
 John Lewis  
 Robert V. Eaton  
 Ervory Morrow  
 Wm. J. Burdell  
 John J. Burdell  
 Wm. H. Haskins  
 Elizabeth Smith  
 Martha Williams  
 Margaret Lake  
 Susan Hargrove  
 Susan Newton  
 Rhoda Davis  
 Mary Glover  
 Mary Hendrick  
 Mary Hyflin  
 Emily Morrow  
 Nancy J. inkin

Harriet Overby  
 Mary Clardy  
 Ann Newton  
 Mary G. Burdell  
 Catharine Eaton  
 Francis Jones  
 Mildred Marrow  
 Rebecca Chapman  
 Mary Chapman  
 Elizabeth Ninton  
 Mildred Hyflin  
 Nancy Hyflin  
 Helen R. Somerswell  
 Jane Sims  
 Betsey J. Marrow  
 Mary J. Eber  
 Sarah Burdell  
 Robert J. Boyd from  
 Mary Boyd from  
 Elizabeth Chapman  
 Jane Johnson  
 Jane Higgins  
 Sarah Coleman  
 Peter Furrow  
 Martha J. Furrow 48

**TABERNACLE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
MEMBERSHIP ROLL FOR 1836**

Anthony Sale, (Lay Preacher and Class Leader)	Harriet Overby
William A. Sommervill(e), (Steward)	Mary Clardy
William Hargrove	Anne Newton
Benjamin Heflin	Mary G. Burrel (Burwell)
James M. Williams	Catharine Eaton
James Lewis	Frances Grun
John Lewis	Mildred Marrow
Robert V. Eaton	Rebecca Chapman
Drewry Marrow	Mary Chapman
William A. Burrel (Burwell)	Elisabeth Newton
John L. Burrel (Burwell)	Mildred Heflin
William H. Haskin	Nancy Heflin
Elisabeth Smith	Helen B. Somervill(e)
Martha Williams	Jane Sims
Margaret Sale	Betsy D. Marrow
Susan Hargrove	Mary T. Epas
Susan Newton	Sarah Burrell (Burwell)
Rhoda Davis	Robert J. Boyd (?)
Mary Glover	Mary Boyd (?)
Mary Hendorik	Elisabeth Chapman
Marry Heflin	James Johnson
Jinny Marrow	James Riggins
Nancy Jenkins	Sarah Coleman
	Petter Farrar
	Martha G. Farrar

## WITHIN THE TABERNACLE SOCIETY: 1836

Noticeably absent from this list of members of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church in 1836 is the family name of Taylor. We know that one part of the family moved to Tennessee in the 1820s. We also know that Colonel Edmund Taylor and his family moved to the area near Stovall in the 1790s. Some of these Taylors also maintained residences in Granville County, North Carolina and Mecklenburg County Virginia. While the Taylor family maintained a plantation in this area during the nineteenth century, they appear to have been from a different branch of the family. Later in the nineteenth century, some members of the Taylor family are listed among the officers of the church again. We can only conclude that during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the leadership had passed to other families.

In 1836, we notice that Anthony Sale is listed as the “class leader” and “lay preacher” for Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church. The “class leader” would have been the primary leader of the church, (something between a “Lay Leader” and a “Sunday School Superintendent” to make an analogy with contemporary leadership roles in the life of the local church.) Sometimes, as was the case with Jesse Lee, a “class leader” might be called upon to substitute for the ordained minister on the circuit. Such persons were known as “lay preachers,” and in some cases, they came close to being the pastors of local churches themselves, in fact if not in terms of actual appointment. This same year, 1836, Ira T. Wyche was listed as the “class leader” of the Oxford Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>6</sup> Wyche later became an ordained minister in the North Carolina conference, pastoring Tabernacle Church from 1865-1868 while it was part of the Henderson Circuit. Wyche later returned to Oxford to pastor the church he had once been the class leader of in 1836.

Also in 1836, William A. Somervill(e) was listed as the “steward” of the Tabernacle Church. It has already been mentioned that some of the Somerville family from this area went out to Tabernacle, Tennessee with members of the Taylor family, one of whom became a minister. Here we see an example of a member of the Somerville family who stayed behind, serving as the “treasurer” or financial officer of the congregation. The steward would be responsible for collecting money and goods from members of the “society” or congregation to pay the expenses of the circuit riding preacher assigned to their circuit as well as a modest salary. Usually, all the stewards of the circuit would be called together at least once a year to make decisions regarding the “assessments” from the Annual Conference. (or “apportionments” as they were later called.) Each circuit would be assigned an amount of money to contribute to the expenses of the ministers and ministries of the Conference.

Also listed among the membership of Tabernacle Church in 1836 are two persons with the family name of Hargrove: William and Susan. This William Hargrove was probably the same person who was listed in Granville County records as being a member of the American Bible Society in 1823.<sup>7</sup> He

was also likely to have been the father or brother of John and Charles Hargrove who were active in Tabernacle Church in 1848. Charles Hargrove is recorded as having granted the land on which Tabernacle Church was situated to a group of trustees which included Drewry S. Marrow, William A. Burwell, Charles R. Eaton, James M. Williams, and James Rideout.

#### DEED FOR TABERNACLE CHURCH: 1848

CHAS. M. HARGROVE

TO

TRUSTES OF TARBERNACLE\*

This Indenture made this the 9th day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty eight between Charles M. Hargrove of the County of Granville and State of North Carolina on the one part and Drewry S. Marrow, Wm. A. Burwell, Charles R. Eaton; James M. Williams, and James Rideout Trustees in Trust for the purpose of holding for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, certain property to be hereinafter described of the above named County & State on the other part Witnesseth, that the said Charles M. Hargrove, for and in Consideration of the Sum of one dollar to him in hand paid the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged hath bargained and sold and by these presents doth bargain and sell, alien, and convey unto them the Said Trustees and their Successors in office forever one acre of Land lying immediately around the house of Reigious Worship long known as Tabernacle Church situate near the road leading from Williamsboro. to Taylor's Ferry the Said acre of Land to be measured from the Center of Said Church every way together with the house named and all the waters ways, and privileges thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining; to have and to hold as a place of worship for the Methodist Episcopal Chuch South and for no other purpose whatever, being subject in all respects to the laws of North Carolina in Such cases provided. And to manage, and control Said property according to the rules of the beforementioned church and the Said Charles M. Hargrove; doth for himself, his heirs and assigns warrant and confirm unto Said Trustees all the title which he hath to said property

In testimony of which he hath hereunto affixed his hand and Seal, this the 9th day of Oct 1848.

In presence of  
Chas. M. Hargrove (Seal)

Jno Hargrove

Jno C. Taylor

North Carolina

Granville County

November Court AD 1848

\*The words "Trustes" & "Tarbernacle" are obvious misspellings of "Trustees" & "Tabernacle." We have chosen to leave this typed copy of the deed as the original document was written.

The execution of the foregoing deed was duely proven on oath in open court by John Hargrove one of the subscribing witnesses thereto and ordered to be registered.

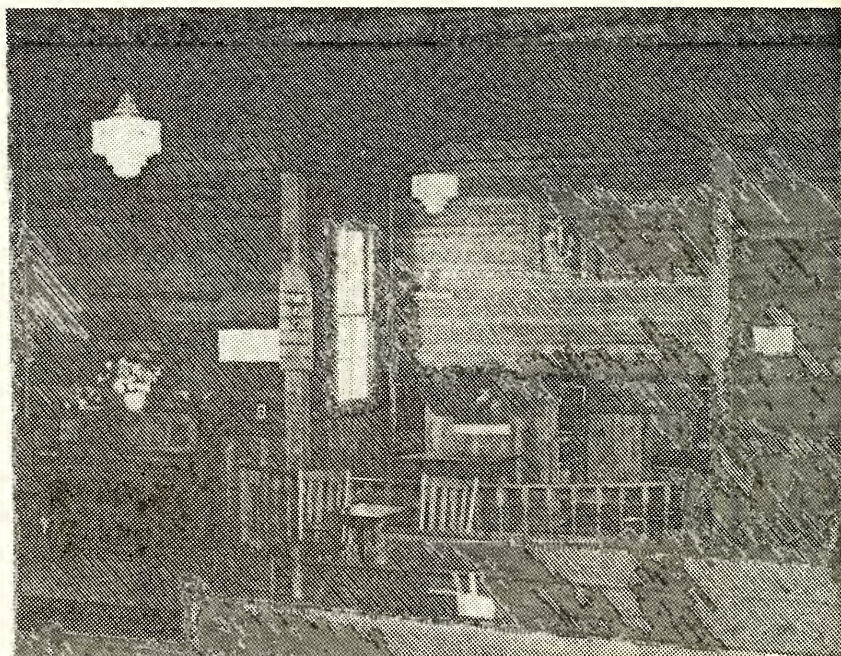
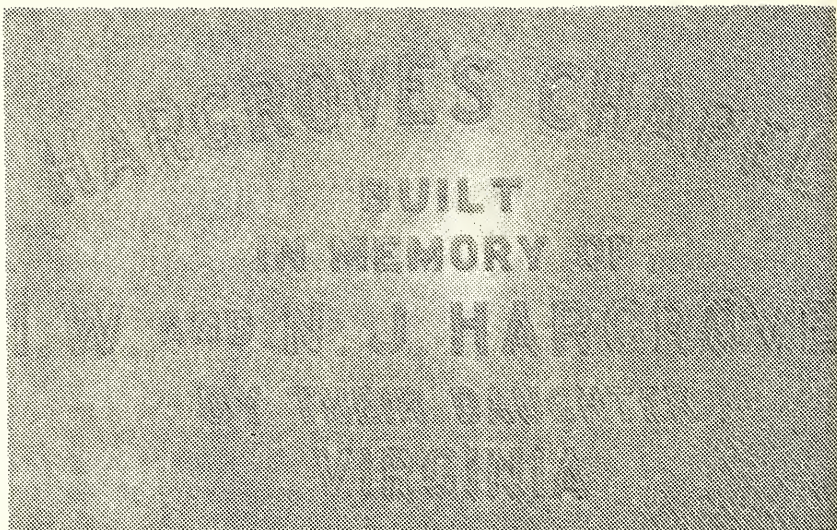
Witness  
Jas M. Wiggins Clk  
Truely Regt.  
Pr L.A. Paschall P R'

Hargrove family records found in the Granville County Courthouse and Library in Oxford, N.C., list John Hargrove as having "built Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church," but no date is given for this effort.' The deed listed above would appear to imply that when the land was given to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1848 a "house of Religious Worship" was already in use. It could be that John Hargrove built that building at some date prior to 1848. Another source dates a church being built for the congregation at Tabernacle in 1855. With such sketchy evidence, it is difficult to conclude much if anything about the date when Hargrove built the church alluded to above. It could have been anytime in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, if the reference to a church having been built in 1855 at Tabernacle is accurate, then we might assume that Hargrove's building was built earlier in the nineteenth century and was subsequently replaced by another building in 1855.

Still later, Miss Virginia Hargrove would contribute to the development of Methodism in this area by giving a building she had built for use as a private chapel to the members of a Methodist society composed of black Christians from the Townsville area. "Miss Jinny", as she was known in the community, first deeded the land to the trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Townsville on May 8, 1909. A later deed dated July, 10, 1920, indicates that the building and land was given to the trustees of Hargrove's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to know just what the connections were between the Methodists who founded Hargrove's Chapel and our own congregation. We do know that as late as 1896, two members of our congregation were black: Sarah Chavis and Alice Tarry. Some of our older members remember worshiping with "Aunt Sarah" as she was known to the community. Nannie Belle Coghill remembers that one of the first times she received Communion as a little girl she knelt at the altar rail beside Mrs. Chavis. A black man named "Uncle Wag" Lewis served our church as sexton during the latter years of the nineteenth century. There are no doubt other connections between our congregation and those Methodists who would later found Hargrove's Chapel Church but at present these connections cannot be established.

It is, however, interesting to note that both Tabernacle and Hargrove's Chapel received gifts of land and building from different members of the same family. The Hargrove family, like the Taylors earlier, and other families who would come later, provided the constant support necessary for the mission of Methodism to continue through changes in the circuit align-





**Interior of Hargrove's Chapel United Methodist Church  
Built 1912. Deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1920.**



ment, changes in the conference and district structures, and those ever changing appointments of pastors. Through all the changes of the 1830s and 1840s, families like the Hargroves gave themselves to the project of preparing Tabernacle Church for a more permanent foundation and structure as a congregation in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## "LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS" 1842-1919

### A COMMUNITY DEVELOPS

During the first half century of the nineteenth century, the American frontier was pushed farther west with the population surging across the country in search of land and opportunities. Change was the order of the day. During the second half of the century, however, many communities in the Carolinas found themselves in the midst of changes of another order — laying the foundations for the future. Up until this point, this area of northcentral North Carolina and southern Virginia was largely rural and undeveloped. But due to the rising fortunes of the tobacco industry in this area, new opportunities for development began to emerge affecting all aspects of our community.

In the years of 1843 to 1850, Clarksville, Virginia was a great tobacco market and boasted the largest production of manufactured tobacco in the world. The Roanoke River was the only means of transportation for the northern markets.

During this period, the citizens of Clarksville were, of course, interested in tobacco and in getting better means of shipping their goods. They conceived the idea of building a railroad that would put them in touch with the northern markets.

The nearest point on the Seaboard Air Line Railroad was then at Manson, North Carolina. The Roanoke Valley Railroad was constructed and passed through what is now known as Townsville, North Carolina.

The people constructed the depot which was the only one within twenty-five miles. The tract of land was given by Mr. Edmund Towns, who lived then where Mr. Robert B. Taylor now resides ("Macpelah"). Townsville was founded in the year of 1850.<sup>1</sup>

During the following decade, the little community of Townsville began to develop. A hotel was built near J. J. White's store and progressed for some time. In 1855, the first store in Townsville was built and run by John Cheatham. Shortly after that, another store was opened by George Davis. Then, in 1857, the Hughes brothers came to this area and started yet a third store.<sup>2</sup>

During the next few years a school was opened where the Presbyterian manse now stands. This was a bright period in the history of our community. With all of this development, the Christians in the area also began to establish their congregations on a firmer foundation. From 1852-1855, most of the churches in the vicinity of Townsville (formerly Lynesville) were built or remodeled. Nutbush Presbyterian, which dates back to 1757, was remodeled during this time. St. Luke's Episcopal Church, just up the road and across the state line from Tabernacle in Virginia was built in 1855.<sup>3</sup>

As noted earlier, this was also the same year that a new building as erected for the congregation of Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church, South.\*

### **THE HENDERSON CIRCUIT: 1842 to 1885**

As communities in the Carolinas and Virginia began to develop, so also did the circuits of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. By 1837, there were enough churches and circuits in the Carolinas to form the North Carolina Conference. During the years immediately following the formation of the new conference, circuits were in the process of being established. As the old Granville Circuit grew larger, it became more difficult for one minister to serve the needs of the churches by himself. By 1841, the last year that the Granville Circuit included the churches in the Henderson area, more than 700 persons, black and white were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in some fifteen or so congregations in the area which comprised the Granville Circuit.<sup>4</sup> The ministers appointed to serve the Granville Circuit from 1837 to 1842 were as follows:

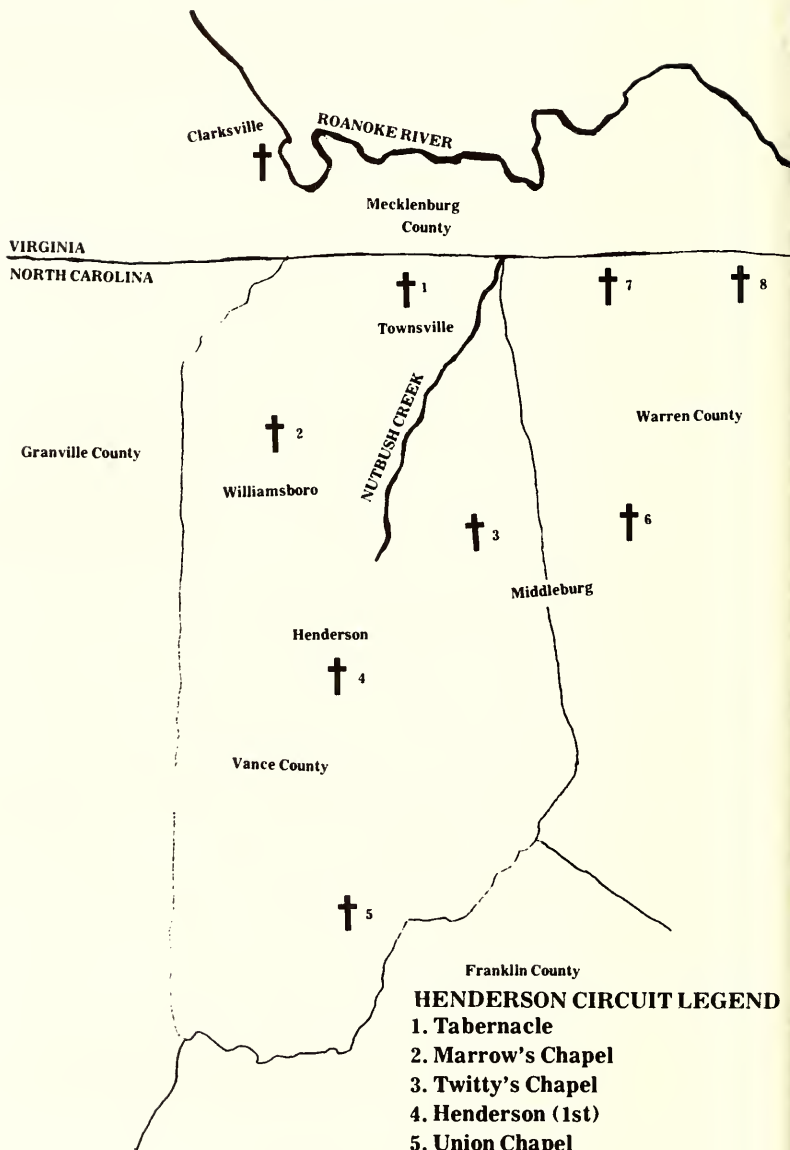
Henry Speck	1837 to 1838
Joseph Goodman	1838 to 1840
David B. Nicholson	1840 to 1841
William Compton	1841 to 1842

During the latter part of 1840, a second conference was held at which time the appointment for the Granville Circuit read "one to be supplied." There is some evidence that during the latter part of 1841, William Compton was involved in setting up the new circuit in the Henderson area to which he was formally appointed in 1842. During this five year period between the formation of the North Carolina Conference and the establishment of the Henderson Circuit, Hezekiah G. Leigh and James Jamieson served as the presiding elders in this area of the Raleigh District.

Given the fact that records from this time period do not list the names of churches on the circuits, we can only surmise that Tabernacle was likely to have been assigned to the Henderson Circuit sometime soon after its formation. In 1843, the minutes of the North Carolina Conference report that there were 16 black members and 181 white members on the Henderson Circuit. By 1845, the circuit had grown considerably, having 44 black and 371 white members in the congregations on the circuit. After 1845, the number of persons listed in the minutes of the North Carolina Conference for the Hender-

\*In 1844, the southern churches broke away from the Methodist Episcopal Church over the issue of slavery. Also at issue in this split was the authority of Bishops in the church in relation to General Conference. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South and the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) would be re-united in 1939 at the time of union with the Methodist Protestant Church, which had earlier split from the old Methodist Episcopal Church in 1828 over the rights of the laity in the governing of the church.

# HENDERSON CIRCUIT 1842 — 1885



## HENDERSON CIRCUIT LEGEND

1. Tabernacle
2. Marrow's Chapel
3. Twitty's Chapel
4. Henderson (1st)
5. Union Chapel
6. Ridgeway
7. Zion
8. Jerusalem
9. Clarksville (?)

Note: Twitty's Chapel moved to Middleburg in 1878.

son Circuit remains fairly stable with little growth. From this, we may suggest the possibility that in 1844 and 1845 several new churches were added to the circuit. Tabernacle would certainly have been part of the Henderson Circuit by 1845, if it were not already part of the circuit from the beginning.

Given the occasional addition of one or another church to a circuit or the removal of a church to another circuit for more practical supervision of the church's ministry, it is difficult to say what churches were on the Henderson Circuit. We do know that in 1876, the following churches were on the Henderson Circuit: Tabernacle, Marrow's Chapel, Rockspring (afterward Henderson Station), Union Chapel (in Kittrell), Twitty's Chapel (later moved to Middleburg in 1878), Ridgeway, Zion and Jerusalem<sup>s</sup> (both of which were in Warren County near the Virginia state boundary.) We also know that in 1854 and 1855 one or more churches in the area of Clarksville, Virginia were on the Henderson Circuit. Some Conference records refer to this circuit as the "Henderson and Clarksville" Circuit during this period. In later years it is possible that Union Chapel near Palmer Springs, Virginia may have been on the Henderson Circuit or its succeeding Ridgeway Circuit given its proximity to Jerusalem and Zion churches.

During the period of time that Tabernacle was on the Henderson Circuit, the following persons served as pastors on the circuit.

William Compton	1842-1843
William Closs	1843-1844
Robert O. Burton	1844-1846
Thomas Sale Campbell	1846-1848
Peter Doub	1848-1850
Evan S. Freeman	1850
Thomas B. Reeks	1850-1852
Philmer A. Archer	1852-1854
Junius P. Moore	1854-1855
Peter H. Joyner	1855-1856
John Tillett	1856-1858
Benjamin F. Long	1858-1860
Lemon Shell	1860-1862
Joesph Wheeler	1862-1864
T. Page Ricaud	1864-1865
Ira T. Wyche	1865-1868
Henry H. Gibbons	1868-1872
Augustus A. Boshamer	1872-1876
Junius P. Moore	1876-1877
Robert O. Burton	1877-1878
Lucian J. Holden	1878-1879
Richard S. Webb	1879-1883
[I. M. Griffith]	[1883-1885]
Joseph J. Renn	1882-1884



The apparent confusion of dates of the last **three** ministers in this list may be due to the fact that the Henderson Circuit had grown too large for one minister to handle by himself. Perhaps Renn and Griffith were both serving the Henderson Circuit during the same period. The average length of tenure for each pastor during this era in our church was **just under two years**.

### **LIFE ON THE CIRCUIT AND BEYOND**

Once the circuit was established, regular practices began to develop in conducting the ministry of the circuit. Certain Sundays would be designated when the minister would come to each church on the circuit. In the early days of Methodism, when the circuits were fairly large and spread out, the rule of thumb was that the circuit rider would get around to each church on the circuit at least **once** a quarter. Sometimes conditions did not allow this goal to be reached, and at other times the minister might get to the church several times, depending on weather and location. By the time the Henderson Circuit was established it appears that most of the churches in this area were having services about **once** each month. Some records from the decade of 1860 to 1870 suggest that a regular schedule of appointments had begun to develop on the Henderson Circuit.<sup>6</sup>

On the first Sunday of each month, the minister would conduct services at Tabernacle and Marrow's Chapel churches. On the second Sunday, the minister would hold services at Union Chapel and Henderson (Rockspring). On the third Sunday of the month, the minister would journey to Zion and Jerusalem churches in Warren County. Finally, on the fourth Sunday of each month, the minister would complete his round of servies by going to Twitty's Chapel and Ridgeway. During the 1880's this pattern appears to have shifted somewhat. During the years just before the Ridgeway Circuit was formed in 1885, Tabernacle's regular meeting time would have been on the **second** Sunday of the month. We also find references to services held on the first and fourth Sundays during this period, probably occasions when other ministers were in the area and were invited to preach at Tabernacle by the congregation or the presiding elder of the Raleigh District.

Other customs and practices would also emerge, such as the time and place of the **quarterly** meetings, or "quarterly conferences" as they would come to be called. These gatherings were multi-purposed occasions. The early quarterly meetings began on Friday evening or Saturday morning and sometimes lasted through Sunday night. Several ministers would be present. There would be a number of worship experiences including numerous sermons, exhortations, a love feast, and the administration of the sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. In addition to these activities, matters having to do with the administration of the circuit would be dealt with as well. Tabernacle appears to have been used for such meetings from a very early time. While on the Henderson Circuit, quarterly meetings were held here during the mid-to-late summer, either at the end of the second quarter or at the beginning of the third quarter of the year.<sup>7</sup>

An invaluable source of information for the activities of the Henderson and

Ridgeway Circuits is found in the diaries of William Wallace White. Mr. White, who was born and raised in Warren County, NC, was an active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, being very much involved in the activities of the churches in the area of Vance and Warren Counties. Making his home near Enterprise (later re-named Drewry after Drewry S. Marrow), White kept a fairly detailed record of his activities from 1857 to 1910. Not only was Mr. White an outstanding citizen and planter in the area, he also served on committees of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with prominent Methodists such as Josephus Daniels, Julian S. Carr, and Dr. Kilgo. Married to Panthea Burwell Boyd White, W.W. White was born in 1825 and died in 1911. \*



**Captain and Mrs. William Wallace White: 1872**

One of the earliest references to Tabernacle in White's diary records that he attended a quarterly meeting at Tabernacle held on Sunday, June 28th, 1857. He records other quarterly meetings which he attended in July 1860 and August 1869. In August of 1874, White recorded in his diary that he attended the quarterly conference at Tabernacle on Saturday and Sunday, August 1-2.

I rode Rattler to quarterly meeting at Tabernacle, called at Enterprise to see T. P. Paschall. Sermon by Presiding Elder Reverend W. H. Bobbitt, good many official members present. Dined at church, spent night at J.H. Taylor's, Captain George Davis, Mr. Sam Jeffries, Mr. Ricks and sister, spent the night there too. All went to church Sunday, very large congregation, the large church nearly filled with ladies. Sermon and communion.

Apparently, this quarterly meeting was turned into a "protracted" meeting since on Wednesday of that next week, White records that the "meeting is still going on at Tabernacle."

The following year, in November of 1875, White records attending another "protracted meeting" at Tabernacle. He records a number of items in his diary.

Protracted meeting at Tabernacle, William H. Boyd converted. Virginia Conference in session at Danville, Our Conference meets in Wilmington, N.C. on December 1. Rev. A.A. Boshamer closes his work on this circuit, for this year next Sunday. On Wednesday, I attended stewards' meeting at Ridgeway, dined with Rev. A.A. Boshamer, in company with Dr. Closs, J.T. Russell, Dr. Sims, and R.F. Rose.

More than a decade later, White records that members of his family attended a protracted meeting at Tabernacle in August 1886, at which twenty persons were converted. John N. Cole conducted the services at this "protracted meeting." If the references to such meetings in White's diary are any indication, during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Tabernacle had at least one "protracted meeting" each year.

"Protracted Meetings" were religious events lasting several days during which there would be daily services of worship. These experiences were strongly evangelistic, with several ministers present, taking turns preaching or exhorting the people. These would sometimes last three or four days. Some of the longer protracted meetings lasted a week or more. Such meetings differed from the popular "camp meetings" mainly in that folks went home every night to their own homes and would return the next day or evening for services whereas the camp meetings were events in which everyone came and pitched camp for the duration of the meeting.

There are not very many references to "camp meetings" in this area during the latter part of then nineteenth century, but earlier in that century Zion Chapel was widely known in this area for being the site of a camp meeting. A description of the camp meeting setting at Zion illustrates the customs of this unique custom in American Methodism.



Zion was probably chosen because it stood on level ground. A rectangle from two to four cleared acres was required; along each side, tents or cabins were raised. Behind these were kept the carts, wagons, or carriages of the families in each tent. Behind the carriages were the horses. Fires were kept in front of the tents. Within the circle formed by the tents, stages were set up; preaching could thus take place at both ends simultaneously. Night services were lit by candles on the stage and in the trees. To prevent mischief, patrols of men kept a watchful eye.

At dawn a horn was blown. Ten minutes later this was repeated as a signal to begin prayers and singing in each tent. A sermon was given before breakfast, another in mid-morning. Dinner was at 1 p.m. followed by preaching. Supper was at sunset and more preaching followed by candlelight.<sup>9</sup>

The camp meeting tradition has been continued in our sister church in Tabernacle Tennessee, with members of the Taylor family gathering every year for an annual meeting on the grounds of the church there outside of Brownsville, Tennessee. This church family has kept up the camp meeting tradition for over 153 years, the first camp meeting having been held in 1831.

Protracted Meetings and other occasional activities on the Henderson Circuit took place in the context of a carefully administered circuit and district within the annual conference. This system of organization has been described as being analogous to a "set of hoops constantly in motion, each within a larger hoop," each adding to the motion of the other so that the activities of a circuit supported and were supported by activities approved by the annual conference, which in turn was related to the quadrennial General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.<sup>10</sup>

Each circuit had a group of "Stewards" who dealt with the financial matters of maintaining the ministry of the circuit as well as raising the money for the "assessment" of the circuit by the annual conference. Mr. William Wallace White was one of the stewards for the Henderson Circuit for a number of years, and he would later serve in that capacity when some of the churches that had been on the Henderson Circuit were put with other area churches to form the Ridgeway Circuit. Mr. White noted in his diary that in January, 1873, the Stewards met at the parsonage (in Ridgeway), and dealt with financial matters. He noted in particular the amount of the assessment for the whole circuit: \$1050.00. There were eight churches on the Henderson circuit at this time. We get some idea of how the assessment was divided among the churches on the circuit from Mr. White's diary entry for late December 1876, in which he lists the amount accepted for each church on the circuit for that year.

Marrow's Chapel	\$220
Tabernacle	205
Henderson	175
Ridgeway	185
Union	150
Zion	100
Jerusalem	85
Twitty's Chapel	80
Total	\$1200

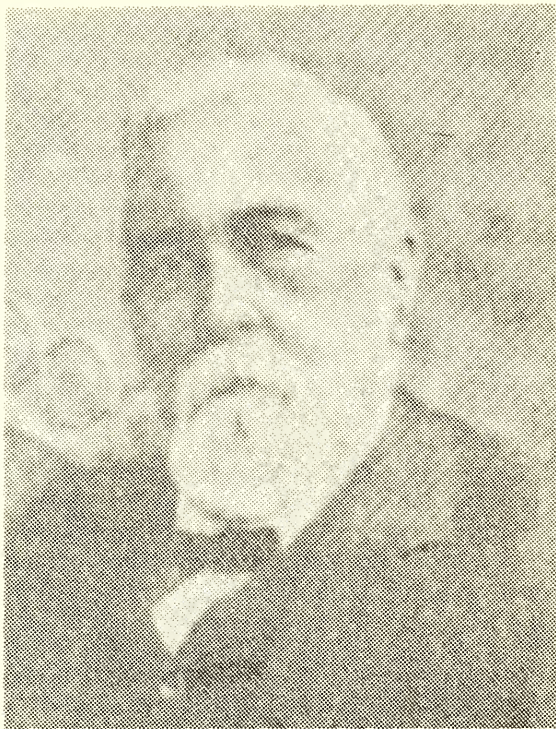
At an earlier meeting of the stewards in January of 1871, White recorded in his diary that the meeting was held "at Ridgeway Thursday, full attendance, I acted as secretary, made assessment of expenses of circuit, amount for preacher \$1330, parsonage \$100, I dined at parsonage, came home in company with John H. and Thomas Taylor and W. H. Boyd." Later that same year, White records attending quarterly conference at Ridgeway in November, where he was elected secretary of the meeting and paid Reverend Gibbons \$15.00 quarterage and \$2.50 in subscriptions to the *Christian Advocate*.

On other occasions, White records going to visit several persons from Twitty's Chapel Church to collect money for that church's share of the assessments for the circuit. The stewards always tried to "settle up" with the pastor of the circuit at the end of each year as the pastor prepared to go to the session of the annual conference usually held during the last quarter of the year, most frequently in late November or early December. In 1876, White attended the session of North Carolina Annual Conference held in Raleigh.

...Wife and I went to Manson, took cars for Raleigh [took the train], Mr. Sturdevant went with us to Mr. Horton's, where we put up, to attend Methodist Conference Centennial now in session. I went to hear Bishop Marvin tonight. Saturday I attended Metropolitan Hall at 10, heard address on "Church and State," by Hon. Mr. Staples, some remarks by Bishops McTurn and Doggett, returned to Mr. Horton's to dine. I took Wife, Mr. and Mrs. Horton and their sister all around the city in a carriage. I returned to hall at night, heard address by Rev. Mr. Black on "Itinerary of Methodism." On Sunday, Wife and I attended Edenton Street Methodist church, heard excellent discourse by Bishop Doggett. Dined at Mr. Horton's at 2, to Metropolitan Hall at 3, heard Sunday School address by Rev. Mr. Renn, remarks by Bishops McTurn and Doggett....Wife and I arose early Monday, made arrangements to go home....We took cars at 10, found carriage waiting at Manson.

White attended annual conference as a delegate from the Henderson and Ridgeway Circuits many times over the last three decades of the nineteenth century.





**William Henry Burwell**  
White's Business partner and member of  
Tabernacle M.E. Church, South



**Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Boyd**

He also records the happenings at a number of district conferences which he attended during those years. One example will suffice to illustrate the kind of activities that made up a district conference in this time period. This district conference was held in the latter part of July, 1878.

. . . Thursday, I went with Boyd to Manson, took cars, arrived in Franklinton at noon. District Conference met there. All circuits represented, Dr. Wilson presided. Dr. R.O. Burton came Friday, business of conference going satisfactorily. Prayer meeting at 9 this morning, conference from 10 to 11:30, preaching at night. Suffering more for rain here than we are at home, Conference set apart an hour for special prayers for rain yesterday. Clouds gathered this evening and a fine rain fell from 6 to 9 in evening. Sessions of conference very interesting, continued with short intermissions on Saturday from 8 in morning to 7 in evening. Then adjourned Sine Die, Rain interfered with services tonight. Beautiful Sabbath, everything refreshed after rain, Love feast this morning at 9 in Methodist church, preaching in all 3 churches in town by Rev. Dr. Wilson, Presiding Elder; R. O. Burton, Rev. Messrs. Black, Holden, Brooks, McLoed, Norman and others. I left Franklinton Sunday night on the down freight train at 7 in evening, arrived Manson at 10. Anthony met me. I spent most of my time in Franklinton with Mr. McGee and family, took tea last night with Dr. Moss. Charlie and John Robinson went to Sunday School picnic at Tabernacle. Wednesday, addresses by Revs. Boshamer and Overby.

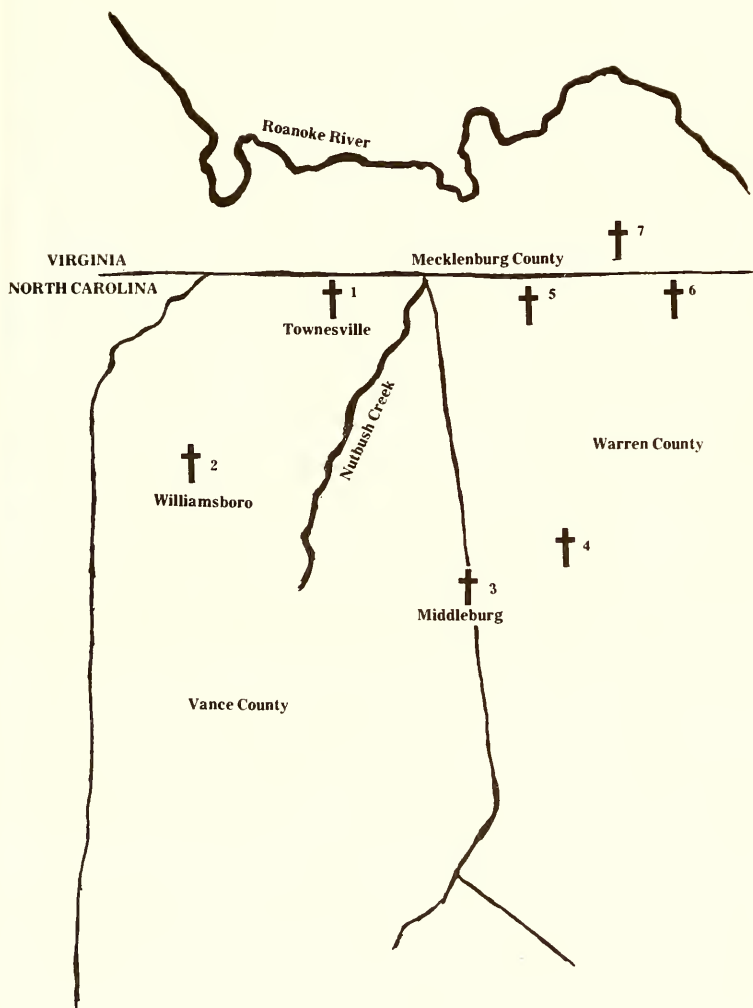
This is but one sample of many such accounts of district conferences, quarterly meetings, and annual conferences which William Wallace White recorded in the pages of his diary. In addition to these accounts, White also records events such as Temperance picnics for young people, the annual Christmas Tree celebration at Tabernacle, and special services and lectures at Tabernacle by such figures as Prof. Anderson and Dr. Kilgo of Duke University. White also recorded the comings and goings of the numerous preachers who happened to stop at his house on their rounds of the circuit as well as recording the first time ministers met their appointments on the circuit and the last occasions they were present. William Wallace White's diary is indeed a treasure chest full of memories of life among the Methodist people on the Henderson Circuit and beyond.

#### **TABERNACLE CHURCH ON THE RIDGEWAY CIRCUIT:**

**1886 to 1919**

At the end of 1885, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in Henderson was made a station charge at the session of the North Carolina Conference held that year. When this happened, a new circuit had to be formed with the churches that had been on the Henderson Circuit. The Ridgeway Circuit was

## RIDGEWAY CIRCUIT 1886-1919



### RIDGEWAY CIRCUIT LEGEND

1. Tabernacle
2. Marrow's Chapel
3. Twitty's Chapel
4. Ridgeway
5. Zion
6. Jerusalem
7. Union Chapel?

formed and began functioning during 1886. So far as we know, at least six churches were assigned to this circuit: Tabernacle, Marrow's Chapel, Middleburg (formerly Twitty's chapel), Ridgeway, Jerusalem and Zion. There is a possibility that Union Chapel Church, just across the state line in Virginia from Zion, was also on the Ridgeway Circuit at some point in time, although this cannot be verified at the present time. John N. Cole was the first pastor assigned to the circuit in December, 1885.

When Cole came to Tabernacle for his first appointment at the church in January 1886, he would have found a church which was very much alive in the midst of a community which was still struggling to find its foundations. During the 1850s the Townsville area had thrived, by all accounts. The period of time during the Civil War saw changes of a different sort. The railroad which had earlier been established from Clarksville, Virginia to Manson, NC, was removed during the year 1864 so as to relay the track to transport supplies to General Lee's army. All the track was taken up between Manson and Clarksville, leaving Townsville with a depot that had no use. Still, the community continued to thrive, at least initially. Tournaments were held in Townsville. They were said to be very elaborate and attracted many folks to the village. Picnics were held on a plot of land about 300 yards from the school building. By 1875, however, things began to take a downward turn in Townsville. That year, the hotel which had been built in 1851, was torn down to provide lumber for Dr. Royster's home. According to one account, from 1880 to 1892, "there was absolutely no outlook for the place as all of the stores by degrees were torn down."<sup>11</sup>

While the future of any church need not be keyed to the circumstances of the community in which it is located, it is nevertheless interesting to note that it was precisely during such a bleak period in the history of Townsville, that the congregation of Tabernacle Church made the decision to build a new building. Begun in the spring of 1888, the new building was erected at a cost of \$1050.00. Little is known about the reasons for building a new church. Perhaps the old building was simply no longer adequate for the congregation's needs. Whatever the reason, the decision to build the new church reflects a measure of faith in the future God would give despite the uncertainties of the situation at that time.

Certainly, one of the more memorable occasions in the history of Tabernacle Church must have been the dedication of the church built in 1888. William Wallace White provides us with a glimpse of some of the activities on the Ridgeway Circuit during the week of November 18th:

Tuesday, (Nov. 20th), Middleburg church dedicated by Bishop Granbury . . . After church Bishop, Dr. Burton, Rev. J. N. Cole, W.H. Burwell and wife, Sister Sarah, John Robinson, Mrs. W.H. Boyd, Graham Boyd, Mrs. James Bullock and others dined with us. On to W.H. Burwell's that night. Wednesday, (Nov. 21st), Bishop Granbury dedicated Tabernacle Church today, dined with John H. Taylor, on to S.P. Read's at night. Thursday, Bishop Granbury preached at





Union today, dined with Dr. Bobbit, on to Ridgeway at night Friday, looks like snow, Nena and Sally Boyd with me to Ridgeway, we held Stewards' meeting, dined with Bishop and many others at parsonage. Bishop on to Raleigh tonight . . . Sunday, real winter weather, Charlie, Nena, the boys, Sally Boyd and I to preaching at Middleburg, J. N. Cole's last appointment on the circuit.

This brief account gives us just enough information to tease the mind into its own imagining of what that week would have been like for the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on the Ridgeway Circuit.

The Bible which is on display in our sanctuary (in a case given by Mr. Frank King), was given to our church in commemoration of the dedication of the building by Bishop Granbury. Embossed in gold letters, the cover of the Bible has these words of commemoration: "Presented to Tabernacle M. E. Church, South, by Mary G. Burwell. November 21st, 1888."

This new building proved to be a more permanent and sturdy structure than previous buildings constructed on the site of the first Tabernacle. It has withstood the wind and weather now for ninety-six years. A wooden frame building approximately 32 feet in width by 50 feet in length, the "new building" is said to have been constructed from yellow pine logs hauled to the building site by members and cut and planed for use at this location. The tin roof on the church is the original one laid in 1888. Inside the church, very



little has changed with the exception that the woodstove is gone, carpet covers the beautiful hardwood floors, and new windows replaced the old ones in the 1920s. The pulpit and pews are original, as are the front doors. Classrooms at the back of the sanctuary, the front porch, and the fellowship hall have been added since 1888, but the place of worship for the congregation of Tabernacle Church remains much like it was the day Bishop Granbury dedicated it on November 21st, 1888.

During the period of time from 1886 to 1919, the following persons served as pastors of Tabernacle while appointed to the Ridgeway Circuit.

John Nelson Cole	1885-1888
Robert O. Burton	1888-1889
John Wesley Jenkins	1889-1892
John A. Hornaday	1892-1896
Thomas J. Daily	1896-1900
Daniel L. Earnhardt	1900-1902
Jacob A. Lee	1902-1903
Leondas M. Chaffin	1903-1907
Berzillai C. Allred	1907-1911
Joseph E. Holden	1911-1916
William C. Merritt	1916-1919

The average length of tenure for pastors of the Ridgeway Circuit was **three** years.

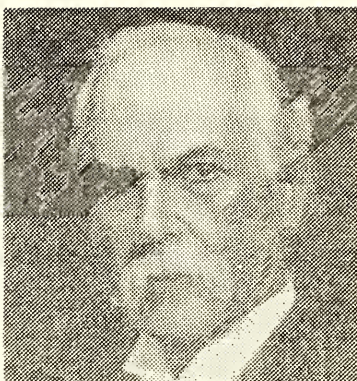
After the new church was built, the old church building was sold to the Border Agricultural Club. The church building had earlier been disassembled and moved across the road from the present building. Apparently, the Border Agricultural Club rebuilt the building and used it for its activities. This building became known in later years as "The Hall" and was used for a variety of purposes including a Union Sunday School and a forum for government speakers on agricultural issues. William Wallace White recorded in his diary that he attended the first meeting of the Border Agricultural Club on June 8, 1888. The next month, on July 5, 1888, White refers to the Club meeting which he notes was held at Tabernacle. Given the fact that the new church building would have been under construction at the time, we could infer from his reference that this was the "old Tabernacle building" where the meeting was held and that it had been rebuilt by this time. On the other hand, White may simply have been referring to the location of the meeting in a more general sense. For instance, in April of 1889, White refers to it again noting, "Saturday, Charlie and I attended Border Club at Tabernacle." Again, in December of that year, White notes that "Friday, George and I attended club meeting at Tabernacle, speech by J.R. Garland." By 1892, White's references to the site of the meeting have changed slightly, thus, "Charlie and Henry to Border Hall late afternoon" is the diary entry for June 30, 1892.

This connection between our church and the farmers and planters in the border area is an important feature of the history of our church. The fact that members of Tabernacle such as W.H. Boyd and W.H. Burwell were also

## **REVEREND JOHN N. COLE**

Pastor of Ridgeway Circuit:  
1855 - 1888

Superintendent of Methodist  
Orphanage 1906 - 1914



involved in the Border Agricultural Club along with other area Methodists such as Williams Wallace White indicates the degree to which leadership in Tabernacle Church and leadership in the Border Agricultural Club overlapped. Planters like these men found it necessary to organize themselves to deal with the pricing war that developed between growers of the "bright leaf" tobacco, warehouse and leaf dealing interests, and the huge American Tobacco Company in the last two decades of the nineteenth century when there were several successive drops in the price of tobacco. During these years, several "farmer's alliances" were organized in this region to deal with problems associated with corrupt warehouse practices and political pressures by the tobacco companies." Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church, South, being a central meeting place for these farmers, it is easy to see why in the very early stages of their organization, the planters used Tabernacle for their meetings before "the Hall" was re-erected across the road from the new church. The connection between "the Hall" and Tabernacle Church would continue to be a strong one until the Border Agricultural Club disbanded and their building fell into disuse just prior to World War One.

The years immediately following the construction of the new building for use by the congregation of Tabernacle Church appear to have been good ones for the church if not for the farmers. By 1896, membership rolls for Tabernacle listed over one hundred and fifty members, more than triple the membership of the church sixty years before when the congregation had been a part of the Granville Circuit. The "Farmers Alliance" having been defeated by the combined opposition of the leaf dealers and the warehouse operators, and a disastrous dive in tobacco prices in 1893, the members of Tabernacle who were farmers faced difficult times in the years just before the turn of the century. Although the price of tobacco did rise again, the farmers in this area still had a hard life. The church, however, now stood on a sturdy foundation, thriving in the face of numerous obstacles faced by its members and providing opportunities for nurture and worship in a community dealing with uncertain prospects as the twentieth century was dawning.

# CHAPTER SIX

## TABERNACLE SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL

Over the years, one of the strongest parts of the ministry of Tabernacle Church has been its Sunday Church School. This has been true of Methodist churches since the beginning of Methodism in this country. Originally, the circuit riders formed "classes" at various places on their circuit. These "class meetings" functioned as a source of support and Christian nurture during the early days of Methodism in the American colonies, and later on the frontier when Methodism began to expand rapidly across the country.

In time, the Methodist movement incorporated some of the strengths and ideas of the Sunday School movement which had begun in England in the late eighteenth century by Robert Raikes in Gloucester, England. Gloucester like many towns and cities during the Industrial Revolution was filled with change and social unrest.<sup>1</sup>

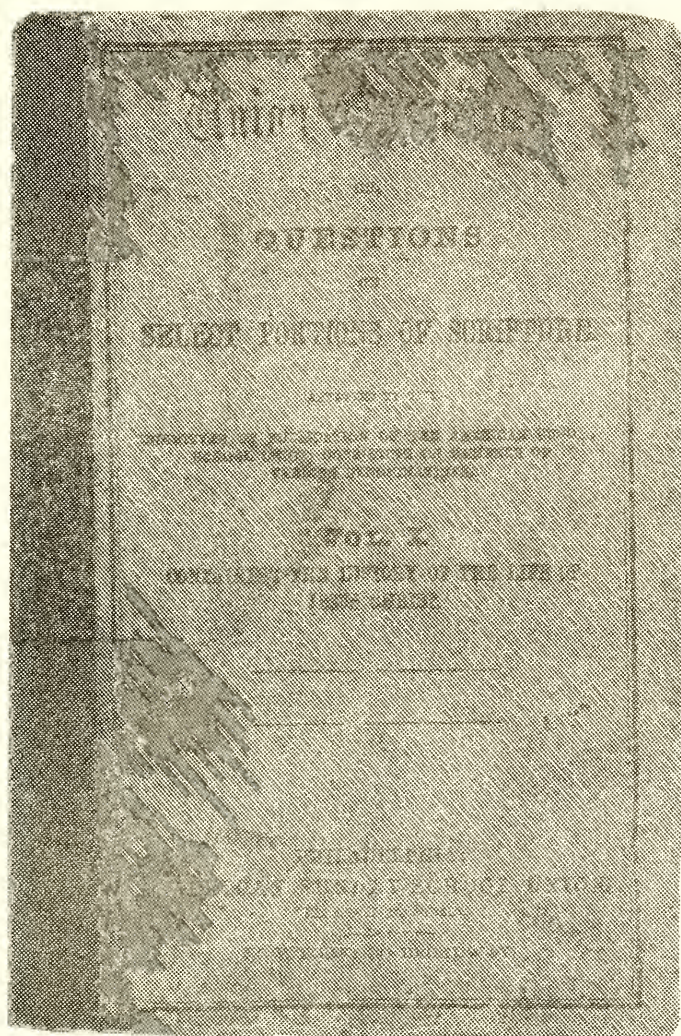
Gloucester was a pit of misery, flooded by people from the countryside and exposing the children from urban proletariat to constant abuse, both casual and entrenched. Few if any, schools existed for these youngsters since most of their "betters" believed education of the poor was economically unsound and socially destructive. The only education was in "charity" or "ragged schools," favored forms of benevolence among a few courageous and wealthy aristocrats. But most children of the poor worked long hours in the factories for six days of the week. Sunday was the day when bands of wandering, unsupervised and often lawless children inflicted damage on the outlying areas.<sup>2</sup>

Raikes, who was a newspaper publisher in Gloucester, started a Sunday charity school to help deal with the root causes of crime among the poor juveniles who were ruining property on the Sabbath. The more he explored the problem, the more Raikes realized that ignorance was one of the causes of crime. Starting his first school in 1780, Raikes set about to "reform the morals of the lower class" in his area of England.<sup>3</sup>

## TABERNACLE UNION SABBATH SCHOOL: 1873

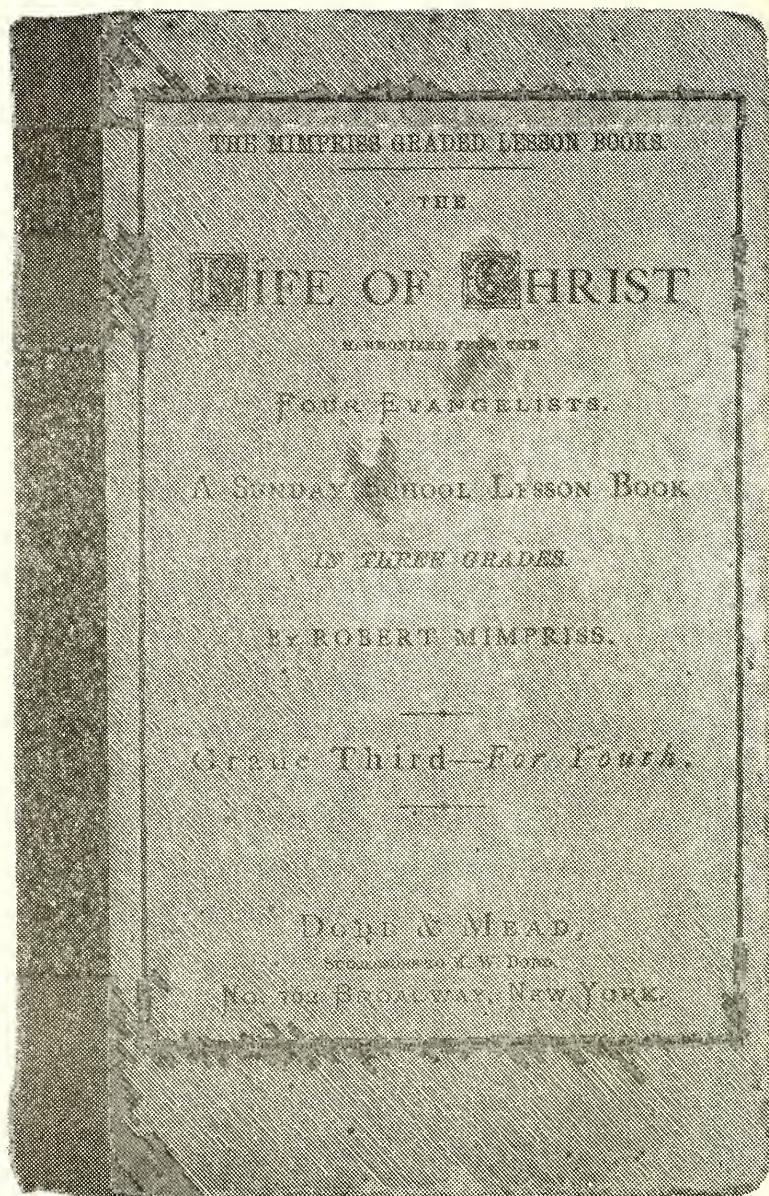
Soon the idea of the "Sunday School" caught on with Christian groups elsewhere so by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Sunday School movement became very widespread in the United States. From the beginning, the focus was educational. Some of the earliest efforts sought to teach boys and girls to read since there were few opportunities for schooling in some areas of the country. Gradually "Union" Sunday School literature and publishing houses sprung up to provide opportunities for training in literacy, morals, and Christian teaching. Some of the earliest records we possess of the "Sabbath Schools" organized here at Tabernacle refer to the "Union Sabbath School" at Tabernacle and note that "Union" curriculum





An example of Union Sunday School Literature used at Tabernacle Church  
"Union Questions or, Questions on Select Portions of Scripture approved by  
the Committee on Publication of the American Sunday School Union Con-  
sisting of Members of the Various Denominations"  
Vol. 1, Containing the History of the Life of Christ





An example of another series of Sunday School curriculum used at Tabernacle Union Sabbath School in 1873

"The Life of Christ: Harmonized from the Four Evangelists: A Sunday School Lesson Book In Three Grades by Robert Mimpriss Grade Third — For Youth"



materials, resources and aids being ordered for use in the newly reorganized school.<sup>4</sup>

In the church records for 1873, the following information is found concerning the establishment of a "Sabbath School" at Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church.

### Secretary's Report

The Sabbath School met on 4th Sabbath in March for the reorganizing, and the following officers were elected:

For Superintendent-	C.T. Reekes
" 1st Asst.-	C.H. Pearson
" 2nd Asst.-	J.L. Ridout
" Secretary and Librarian-	J.H. Taylor

The School met on the 30th of March, 1873, and the following Constitution proposed by J. H. Taylor as unanimously adopted.

Art. 1st.

The Sabbath School is connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church and shall be called the Tabernacle (Union) Sabbath School.

Art. 2nd.

It shall consist of a Superintendent, two Assistant Superintendents, a Secretary and a Librarian and as many teachers and scholars as may be duly received and appointed.

Art. 3rd.

The said officers shall hold their offices for one year and their election shall take place as early in year as practicable.

Sect. 1

It shall be the duty of the Superintendent to open and conduct the exercises, to form classes and appoint teachers, and also to preserve order during the exercises, and to preside at the election of officers and all meetings of the School, and to have the casting vote whenever there is a tie.

Sect. 2nd

It shall be the duty of the Assistant to assist the Superintendent in his duties and to take his place when absent.

Sect. 3rd

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a list of teachers and scholars, the number of classes and teachers to each class, to note the absentees and on every Sabbath before the exercises are closed to report the teachers and scholars absent at the previous meeting.

Sect. 4th

It shall be the duty of the Librarian to number and keep the books in order and to note every one that may be taken away from the Library.

Art. 4th

Strict order shall be preserved and all the rules conformed to by everyone connected with the School.

## Art. 5th

This Constitution may be amended at any meeting, and By-Laws may be made or amended at any quarterly meeting by a majority of all the teachers

Several weeks after the re-organization of the Sabbath School, the secretary reported that 56 scholars and 11 teachers were reported present in attendance on the third Sunday in April, 1873. Through the remainder of the year, attendance ranged from between 24 and 59 "scholars" and six to eleven teachers present each Sunday.

Also reported among the records for that year was a teacher's meeting at which it was decided to award "premiums and prizes among the scholars. Once again, J. H. Taylor offered the following resolutions:

1st Resolved that the scholars who may be most punctual in attendance shall be entitled to a prize.

2nd Each Teacher is to give to any one in his or her class a ticket for perfect lesson recited and at the end of the year the scholar who has the largest number of tickets shall be entitled to a prize, but should there be several of the same number of a prize shall be issued to each.

3rd No teacher is to give a ticket except for a perfect lesson.

(signed) J. H. Taylor

At the bottom of one of the pages in this early record book of the "Union Sabbath School" at Tabernacle there is a list of persons under the heading "cannot read." Because no further comment is given, it is not possible to conclude from this that there was a class for those needing to learn basic skills in literacy. However, we cannot preclude this possibility either. The "scholars" referred to in the above mentioned documents may actually have been studying the basics of reading and writing in addition to the basics of Scripture and the Christian faith! Not only would this have been true of the early history of the Sunday School movement itself, it also reflects the Methodist concern for the social needs and concerns of the poor and disadvantaged as well as their spiritual needs and concerns.

## ROLL OF TABERNACLE SABBATH SCHOOL

1873

No. 1

Mrs. C.H. Pearson's Class

E.B. Burwell

T.W. Taylor

F.H. Taylor

Lank Harris

Frank Harris

P. Owisby

No. 2

Mr. Taylor's Class

Charlie Pearson

Badger Read

Willie Harris  
Tommie Stegal  
John Riggan  
Alex Puryear  
Stiff Walle

No. 3

Mr. Ridout's Class  
Johnie Norwood

Len Strum  
Eddie Strum  
Henry Collier

No. 4

Captain Hargrove's Class  
Willie Spain  
Jonnie Spain  
Jimmie Harris

No. 5

Mr. Sandy Smiley's Class  
Wiley Collier  
Madison Collier  
Holly Butler  
George Spain  
Silas Spain  
Tom Taylor  
William Harris  
J.S. Wess (?)

No. 6

Mrs Riggan's Class  
Patie Newton  
Lucy Newton  
Johnnie Newton  
Rosa Puryear  
Sarah Puryear  
Fannie Hines  
Rebecca Currin

No. 7

Miss. Mat. Peoples' Class  
Mollie Scott  
Mary Taylor  
Mary Hamilton  
Rosa Atkins  
Emily Pearson  
Lizzie People  
Addie Sneed

No. 8

Mrs. Belle's Class

Willie Strum  
Fannie Strum  
Sue Tucker  
Louisa Tucker  
Eliza Stegall  
Rebecca Currin

Apparently, from time to time, usually in the early Spring, the Sunday School had to be re-organized. Another early instance of the reorganization of the Sunday School is that of April 15th, 1882.

The Sunday School was organized today by electing Mr. R.H. Brown, superintendent; and Mr. J.H. Taylor, Assistant Superintendent; C.H. Pearson, secretary; J.A. Ridout, Librarian; and Mrs. G.J. Tarry, organist and leader of the Quire (sic). A collection was taken up and money enough raised to buy books and paper for the use of the school for the year . . .

The Sunday School has had periods of great success as well as darker days when folks at the Church were not sure whether it would survive or not. Mrs. Elizabeth Brewer Wilson recalls an incident from her girlhood, when she and her Aunt Sallie Brewer Short were the only ones who showed up on a particular Sunday morning for Sunday Church School. Lizzie remembers asking her Aunt Sallie why they bothered trying to have Sunday School when no one showed up for it. "Aunt Sallie" rebuked Lizzie for having such a thought and declared, "Why, child, as long as the doors to Tabernacle Church stay open, I will be here for Sunday School even if no one else shows up!" This fierce determination exhibited by Aunt Sallie Short has been a vivid reminder to Lizzie Wilson and other members of our church through the years. No doubt it is because of this determination on the part of members such as Sallie Brewer that Tabernacle's Sunday School has continued to this point and has at times, thrived greatly.

Mrs. Lizzie Wilson was a young woman of nineteen years when she wrote the following history of Tabernacle's Sunday Church School in 1929. We offer it to the reader in its entirety since it was one of the first attempts made by our membership to collect the history of our church so that future generations would understand the significance of the life and ministry of Tabernacle Church. This history was read on the first "Rally Day," a tradition started by James C. Tilghman which celebrates the work of the Sunday School in our church.

#### **THE HISTORY OF TABERNACLE SUNDAY SCHOOL: 1888-1929**

Today, April 14, 1929 has been appointed as Sunday School day for Tabernacle Church, and as this is a special Sunday School service, perhaps it would be interesting to give you a brief history of our Sunday School in order that you may have an idea of what has been done here in years gone by. To you older members, it will bring to mind fond memories of the past and to





**"Senior Quarterly: Third Quarter: 1898"**

Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, Tennessee

Example of Sunday School literature used at Tabernacle Church in 1898 owned or used by Mr. John H. Brewer when he was 26 years old.



the younger may it be an inspiration to carry on the good works.

Tabernacle has always had a Sunday School since the Church was organized. The present building was built in the year of 1888, 41 years ago. Before that time Sunday School was held in the old building, a part of which is still standing just across the road. That building was moved from this spot and purchased by a company of people, then being called the Hall. A union Sunday School was held there for a short while after this building was completed, until it was decided best that each Church have an individual Sunday School. It has remained that way and services have been held in this building ever since that time.

Now; if we would only pause a moment to think of the efforts of our forefathers put forth and the sacrifices they made for their Church and Sunday School; might we not be willing to do just a little more? Back in the 19th century, Sunday School services always began at nine o'clock. There were no conveyances as the automobiles such as we have today. Those who live near the church walked and those from a distance came on buggies and wagons. Nevertheless they were prompt and the attendance was good.

In searching the old records of Tabernacle Sunday School, as nearly correct as possible we find that Mr. John Taylor was the first superintendent. Facts show that he was a faithful and loyal member, filling this office for a number of years, from 1888 to 1896.

In 1897, Mr. W.H. Burwell was elected superintendent. That year there were more than a hundred and fifty scholars on roll. The Sunday School was composed of ten classes and fourteen officers, including teachers. From 1897 to 1899 some of the teachers were:

Mr. W.M. Taylor  
Mrs. W. H. Burwell  
Mrs. H.W. Beaver  
Miss Lucy Burwell  
Mrs. E.B. Brewer  
Mrs. George Richardson  
Mrs. S.H. Johnson  
Miss Annie Burwell  
Miss Salina Moore

In 1900, Mr. W.H. Burwell was still superintendent with about the same number of scholars on roll. Probably some of you remember the names of some of the teachers who served after the year of 1900:

Miss Mary Rideout  
Mrs. W.H. Burwell  
Miss Annie Burwell  
Mr. A.R. Tarry  
Mrs. Martha Riggan

At that time Miss Lucy Burwell was organist, Mr. George Richardson Treasurer, Mr. J.S. Pearson, Secretary, and Mr. Boyd Brewer, Librarian.

Mr. J.L. Rideout was the next superintendent serving for a short while. Mr. W.M. Taylor succeeding him. Mr. Taylor held this office more than one

and discharged his duties loyally for a number of years. He was superintendent from 1908-1912. During those five years there was an average of 130 scholars.

In 1913, Mr. A.T. Smiley was superintendent. Teachers for that year were, Miss Sue Overby, Miss Ruth Brewer, Mrs. R.T. Walston, Mr. A.R. Tarry, Miss Georgie Burwell, Mrs. E.B. Brewer, Miss Sallie Smiley and Miss Lucy Burwell.

In 1914, Mr. W.M. Taylor was again superintendent. In 1915, Mr. Boyd Brewer filled the office and was re-elected in 1916. That year there were 104 scholars on roll, with an average attendance of 53.

Following Mr. Boyd Brewer as superintendent, was Mr. Mangum Massenburg who served for several years.

Mr. J.C. Tilghman was the next superintendent. In 1926-1927, the teachers were, Mr. J.C. Tilghman, Mr. Boyd Brewer, Mrs. E.H. Short, Mrs. W.T. Brewer, Miss Ruth and Lora Brewer, with about 74 scholars on roll.

In 1928, Mr. Alton Grissom was elected superintendent, and is at the present time.

During the 41 years of our Sunday School work we have had nine superintendents, arranged orderly the list is:

Mr. John Taylor

Mr. W.H. Burwell

Mr. J.L. Rideout

Mr. W.M. Taylor

Mr. A.T. Smiley

Mr. Mangum Massenburg

Mr. Boyd Brewer

Mr. J.C. Tilghman

Mr. Alton Grissom

If the length of time that each one served was divided equally among the nine, each would have served from four to five years. Though some were re-elected several times and remained for a longer period and others for a short while.

We also might mention here the names of Mr. Willie Henderson and Mr. Jake Riggan who were the secretaries for a number of years. Especially do we owe honor to Miss Ruth Brewer who has been our primary teacher for more than twenty years. I wonder how many members here could say that Miss Ruth was their first Sunday School teacher and that it was she who gave them their first impression of Sunday School life, and it's work.

There are numerous others we could name, had we the time and space, who were always faithful and true to Tabernacle Sunday School. We will ever cherish the names and lives of these people and remember that we are here to continue their work.

1929 — Our Sunday School was re-organized this spring after being closed for a short time during the winter. At present we have on roll sixty odd scholars with good attendance. Our teachers are Mr. Boyd Brewer, Mr. Richard Matthews, Miss Ruth Brewer, Miss Lora Brewer and Miss Lizzie

Brewer. With Mr. Tilghman to encourage us and to ever lend a helping hand we are striving to make our Sunday School just what it ought to be.

We have often heard some of the older people tell of the good Sunday School Tabernacle used to have and may we of today be inspired to still carry on the work and make them feel proud of the generation they have left behind.

Written by Lizzie P. Brewer  
and read April 14, 19

### HISTORY OF TABERNACLE SUNDAY SCHOOL SINCE 1929

Since the history of Tabernacle's Sunday Church School was first written in 1929 by Lizzie Brewer Wilson, the Sunday School has continued to be a central part of the life of our church. On those Sundays when the pastor was holding worship services at some of the other churches on the circuit members gathered for "church", meeting in their classes in the one room that the church had for those days — the sanctuary. Classes met in various corners of the room. Mrs. Nannie Belle Coghill remembers that "the young women would be on the right hand side at the back of the church, the little folks would sit on the long bench at the back of the church, the young boys on the left hand side at the back of the church, the men would be on the left hand side where the choir is now (at the front), and the women would be on the right hand side where the organ is (at the front). Just imagine, now, having five classes in one room!" Quarters were no doubt sometimes very crowded but all those who came to "the Tabernacle" had the opportunity to learn more about the Gospel and the Christian way of life.

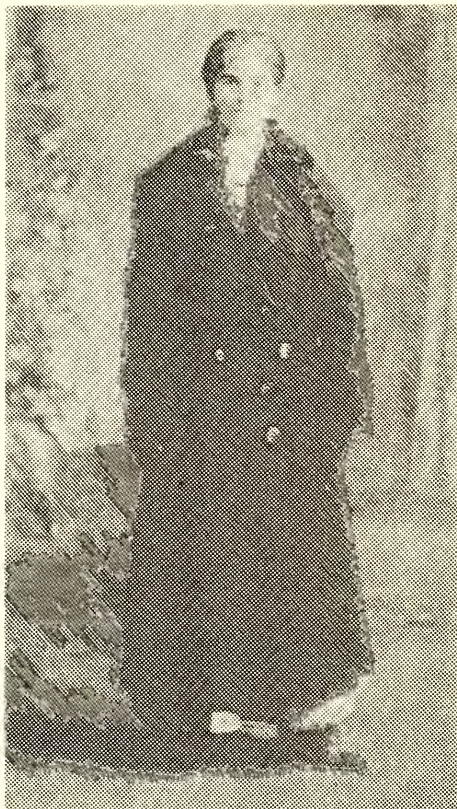
The woman who taught the "little folks" on the long bench at the back of the church was Ruth Brewer who had joined the church in 1893 and who began teaching in the Sunday School in 1913. In 1915, her class of primary age "scholars" numbered thirty persons. Many of these persons would go on to become active church members at Tabernacle and elsewhere in later years. The class included:

Florence Childress	Willie Newton
Fannie Tarry	Annie Smith
Thornton Brewer	Garner Brewer
Lora Brewer	James Reese
John E. Twisdale	Leola Reese
Louise Twisdale	Willie Norwood
Virgie Riggan	Sallie Childress
Willie Riggan	John Smith
Byron Brewer	Frank Childress
Louise Norwood	Earl Caudle
Boyd Henderson	Evelyn Brewer
Billy Burwell	Willie Moorifield
Jake Norwood	Joe Van Dyke
Lou Van Dyke	Lizzie Brewer
Eliza Newton	Selma Norwood

**RUTH BREWER  
CLIBOURNE**

**1884 - 1937**

Sunday School Teacher  
At Tabernacle



During the early years of the Depression, Alton Grissom was the superintendent of the Sunday School. Records from 1930-31 show that the Sunday School offerings ranged from 27 cents to \$1.38 during these difficult years of the Depression. Teachers listed from this time period were Richard Matthews, Jake Riggan, Lizzie Brewer, Boyd Brewer, Mrs. J.W. Short, Selma Norwood, and Thornton Brewer.

In 1934, Lizzie Brewer gave a second review of the history of the Sunday Church School, five years after the first history she wrote. In this revised history of the Sunday School, Lizzie noted:

In 1929, there were about seventy members on roll, with an average of attendance of 53. Since 1929, the teachers on record are Mr. Boyd Brewer, Mr. J.C. Tilghman, Mrs. W.T. Brewer, Mrs. J.W. Short, Mrs. C.L. Twisdale, Mr. Richard Matthews, Mrs. Gene Brewer, and Mrs. Elizabeth Brewer.

For the past two years (since 1932) the list of scholars enrolled has not exceeded that of 1929. Due to the fact that many of our members have moved from the community, our enrollment is not as large as it was many years ago. But we



have a good Sunday School and one that we are proud of. May we continue to add our part to the history of Tabernacle Sunday School.

Finis

Written by Lizzie P. Brewer

We are missing some of our Sunday Church School records, but we do know that G. Boyd Brewer was the superintendent of the Sunday Church School from 1932-1957. Some of our older members remember that during the Depression years Boyd Brewer kept the Sunday School alive when circumstances threatened to close it down. By the middle 1950s, there were 11 persons enrolled in the Sunday Church School with an adult class of 4 members. These were the peak years of our Sunday School in this century.

From June of 1957 until 1960, L. Thurman Watkins was the superintendent of the Sunday School. During these years, the youngest class included Rita Brewer, Maxine Brewer, John Walker, Peggy Norwood, Freddie Richardson, Steve Norwood, Sheila Norwood, and Deanne Norwood.

From 1960 to 1963, Pete Richardson, Sr. was superintendent of the Sunday Church School. A very good average attendance was recorded during these years.

From 1963 to 1965, Ronald Hancock was the superintendent. The list of officers and teachers for these years includes J.C. Tilghman, Virginia Watkins, Oliver Brewer, Julia Brewer, Geraldine Brewer, Betty Norwood, Frankie Walker, and Dave Norwood.

From July 1965 to 1967, Charlie T. Norwood, Sr. was superintendent. During that time, 93 persons were enrolled in the Sunday School program of Tabernacle Church. The records from this time report several Sundays when the Sunday Church School had to be cancelled because of snow. Offerings during this period of time ranged from \$49.00 to \$126.00.

From June 1967 to 1971, Jack Brewer was superintendent. The roll listed 71 persons as members of the Sunday School. The average attendance was 49.

From June 1971 to the next year, Ron Hancock served a second term as the superintendent of the Sunday School.

Since 1972, the Sunday Church School has had two superintendents. Macdonald Twisdale served from 1972 to 1978. During these years the attendance ranged from 43 to 56 persons. Kenneth Clark is currently superintendent of the Sunday School, having served since 1978.

The past fifty-five years of our Sunday Church School have been blessed with excellent superintendents. Records kept by the secretaries of the Sunday School are made interesting with notes about the weather: "hot, very hot and dry", "cold, ice on the ground", etc. We did not count the days, but the majority of Sundays appear to have been "fair and clear". Let us hope that this is an indication of our relationship with the Lord.

Compiled by Alice Wilson  
Church Librarian



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE HISTORY OF TABERNACLE WOMENS ORGANIZATIONS

The women of Tabernacle Church have done the best job of all of the groups in our church keeping their history.' Women have taken an active role since the beginning and will no doubt continue to be active in all aspects of the church's ministry. As early as 1888, we know that the women of Tabernacle Church organized a bazaar at Townsville from which enough money was raised to cover almost half of the cost of the construction of the new church. This may have been the occasion of the organization of the first women's missionary society at Tabernacle by Lucy Cole Burwell. By 1938, the Women's Missionary Society had been organized. This group would later be called the Womens Society of Christian Service (W.S.C.S.) Then in 1971 the United Methodist Women succeeded the W.S.C.S. Today, the women of our church are organized into two "circles" within the United Methodist Women organization.

Three "histories" of the work of Tabernacle women have been written. The first of these was written in August of 1948 by Lizzie Wilson and presented by Lizzie on August 29, 1948. This history covers the first ten years of the society.

### HISTORY OF THE WOMAN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

JULY 1938-JULY 1948

We are gathered together here today at Tabernacle Church to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our Woman's Missionary Society. It has been the function of this society to lead in our homes: (1) ideas about God, (2) human relationships and (3) our duties as citizens. We have enjoyed the social contact, we have a deep interest in our members, and we have learned to share our joys and sorrows.

It is with sincere gratitude that we give you a brief history of the ten years we have worked together for the good of God's cause.

It was at Tabernacle Church on the fifth Sunday in July 1938, the Woman's Missionary Society was organized by Rev. and Mrs. D.A. Petty. After discussing the purpose and aims of the society the following officers were elected:

President .....	Mrs. Alma Stovall
Vice President .....	Mrs. Annie Jones
Secretary .....	Miss Bobbie Grissom
Treasurer .....	Mrs. Bessie Smiley
Study Leader .....	Mrs. Lizzie Wilson
Local Work .....	Mrs. Edna Brewer

It was through Mrs. Petty's influence and the splendid cooperation of the members that we received inspiration and courage to carry on in this field.

# Honorary Baby Membersh



This certifies that

Jimmy Twisdale

is an

Honorary Member

of the

Woman's Society of Christian Service  
The Methodist Church

Conference Woman's Society  
of Christian Service



Woman's Division  
Christian Service

for B. A. B. McKinn  
Treasurer

Henrietta Gibson  
Treasurer

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ur Charter Roll numbered twenty six members, out of this number twenty ree were active members. (Read Charter Roll). Present membership — irty members.

Our Honorary Roll consisted of the following:

Mrs. Mary Moore  
Mrs. Octavia Kimball  
Mrs. Georgia Tilghman  
Miss Alice Coghill  
Mrs. Annie Barnes

The presidents serving over a period of ten years are as follows:

Mrs. Alma Stovall  
Mrs. Mattie Walston  
Mrs. Annie Jones  
Mrs. Lora Short  
Mrs. Lizzie Wilson  
Mrs. Mary Frazier Short

It can be truly said all officers have served faithfully and there are several ho deserve honorable mention. Mrs. Annie Jones has served both as president and vice president for a number of years. Mrs. Bessie Smiley, our first reasurer, has so capably handled our funds for a period of five years. Mrs. ora Short, has served twice as president of our society. Mrs. Nannie B. oghill has served as vice president for a number of years. Miss Bobbie rissom has served as secretary for several years. Miss Grissom kept a plendid record and informed us of Conference Work. Our present officer of ocal Work, Mrs. Bessie King has served a period of five years.

At the beginning of each year we made our pledge to missions. The pledges ave been \$20.00, \$25.00, and \$30.00; we have over paid each year. During ach year we have observed The Week of Prayer and Self-Denial, a generous ffering being made. Our offering last year, 1947, was \$26.00. The money aid to missions over a ten year period has been \$500.00.

We have had several certificates of merit given our society. A memorial ertificate of \$50.00 was given in 1945 for Mrs. Annie Grissom. The first baby ertificate — \$25.00 — was given for Jimmy Twisdale. Four honorary baby ertificates — \$25.00 — were presented in 1945 by an unknown person for:

Rebecca Short  
Richard Norwood, Jr.  
Nancy Page Van Dyke  
Catherine Riggan

A Junior Certificate — \$10.00 — was given for Mary Frances Strum. These ertificates give our society credit in mission work.

To an outsider paying our dues to two treasurers would seem complicated. ur Pledge, Week of Prayer Offering, Penny A Day, and Certificate funds go o missions. Each member pays dues to the Local Treasurer. Birthday funds nd various ways of making money such as Suppers, Fiddle Conventions, nd selling farm products, the proceeds go in our Local Treasury. Our Local reasury had paid out in ten years appoximately \$800.00. Our balance in the

bank is \$72.69.

In 1940 Mrs Annie Jones was sent to Henderson to the District Conference. In 1941, the year our society was changed from Woman's Missionary Society to Woman's Society of Christian Service, Miss Bobbie Grissom was sent to Rocky Mount. Mrs. Lora Short was sent to Raleigh in 1942. In 1943, Miss Grissom was sent to Sanford. The District Conference was not held in 1944 and 1945. In 1946, Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill went to Durham and in 1947, Mrs. Lizzie Wilson was sent to Wilmington. Our Woman's Society of Christian Service attended the Zone Meeting.

Study courses have been held during the ten years. The following people have given the courses: Mrs. Eugene Howerton of Clarksville, Mrs. Tom Lee of Middleburg, Mrs. Jennie Williamson of Weldon, Mrs. E.C. Farris of Henderson, Rev. M.C. Wilkerson of Clarksville, Miss Sara Boyd of Townsville, Rev. Lee, Rev. Brothers, and several have been held jointly with other churches on the charge.

One phase of our work is to remember the sick in our community with gifts, flowers or cards. And at Christmas time gifts to the needy. We have remembered former pastors with "Love Gifts"; Mr. Draper, Mr. Daily, and Mr. Woodall.

We have had many gifts and donations. Mrs. Campbell gave our Service Roll. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. King gave the American Flag. Mr. Jame Tilghman gave the church plaque. Our Hymnals were donated and given in memory, total cost \$75.00. The Memorial Windows were given by various families for — M. B. Harris, Lex and Ella Twisdale, Rebecca Norwood, W.D. Yancey, F.O. King, W.J. Hudson, Richard Matthews, J.L. Riggan, W.H. Burwell and E.B. Brewer.

The collection plates were given by the Brewer nieces and nephews in memory of Ruth Brewer Cliborne, and by Mr. W.S. Smiley, Melvin Smiley and Daisy Yancey Smiley.

#### Projects from 1938-1948

1. Sent money and quilts to Methodist Orphanage
2. Bought song books for Sunday School
3. Bought book racks
4. Bought rubber track (rubber mat for aisles of sanctuary)
5. Helped pay for electric stove for parsonage
6. Helped pay for rug for parsonage
7. Helped pay for painting of inside of church
8. Bought shrubbery
9. Donated money during revivals
10. Helped pay sexton
11. Helped pay for electric fixtures
12. Helped pay for church insurance
13. Paid Brotherhood calls (North Carolina Conference Emergency Fund for Minister's families)
14. One of our interesting projects is sending Barbara Newton to our Methodist School at Thomasville, Ga. We are more than pleased with Bar



# Honorary Baby Membership



*This certifies that*

*Katherine Lee Riggan*

is an

## Honorary Member

of the

Woman's Society of Christian Service

## The Methodist Church

*Mrs F. B. Mc Linn*  
WOMAN'S CONFERENCE SOCIETY OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

TREASURER

*Henrietta Gibson*  
WOMAN'S DIVISION OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE

TREASURER

DATE *November 8, 1940*

bara's splendid record and we shall continue to help her during the coming year.

15. Our present project is to buy a carpet for the church. We have had several donations from our friends. We would like to have enough funds by the end of the year to buy the carpet.

We have been successful with our projects. This is due to the fact that each member feels a personal responsibility and they love their church.

We cannot complete a brief history of our work without remembering our members who have passed away:

Mrs. Sallie Short  
Miss Alice Coghill  
Mrs. Annie Grissom  
Mrs. Octavia Kimball

The floral tributes in the church today were given by members of their families in memory of them.

A second history of the work of Tabernacle women was written in 1963 at the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the women's society. This history was written and presented by Mrs. Mattie B. Walston in July, 1963.

#### **A Brief Review of the Tabernacle Methodist Church Woman's Society of Christian Service: 1938-1963**

We have only to look around us to realize that this could be called a "remember when" occasion. How many of us remember when we banded together as a missionary group on the fifth Sunday in July 1938? That was twenty five years ago this month. Eighteen members met with Rev. And Mrs. D.A. Petty to organize our Society. Twenty three members were enrolled at that July meeting. They were as follows:

Mrs. Edna Brewer  
Mrs. Effie Capps Brewer  
Mrs. Fannie Brewer  
Miss Alice Coghill  
Miss Bobbie Grissom  
Mrs. Annie Grissom  
Mrs. Henrietta Hight  
Mrs. Annie Jones  
Mrs. Bessie King  
Mrs. Mary Jack Mathews  
Mrs. Maggie Matthews  
Mrs. Minna Norwood  
Mrs. Gladys Nowood  
Mrs. Lora Short  
Mrs. Sallie Short  
Mrs. Bessie Smiley  
Mrs. Alma Stovall  
Mrs. Lela Strumb  
Mrs. Mildred Strum

Mrs. Myrtle Twisdale  
Mrs. Martha Wilson  
Mrs. Lizzie Wilson  
Mrs. Mary Yancey

Of these twenty three members, twelve are still on the roll. Six of them have gone to other churches, five have passed away, including Mrs. Sallie hort, Mrs. Annie Grissom, Mrs. Maggie Matthews, Miss Alice Coghill and Mrs. Effie Capps Brewer.

In 1948 a tenth year anniversary was observed at the church. Rev. and Mrs. D.A. Petty were invited as special guests.

Our review of the records will now be from 1949.

#### 1949

##### January

Records show thirty seven members on roll, twenty seven active and ten honorary roll members. Rev. L.C. Brothers was pastor at this time. Two Baby Life Memberships were presented for John Edward and Elizabeth Haven Wilson.

##### February

Mrs. Bessie King was elected a delegate to the conference to be held in Burlington in April. Julia Anne Brewer was presented with a Baby Life Membership.

##### March

Rev. L.C. Brothers taught our church study course; "The Church and the Rural Community".

##### April

A Junior Life Membership was presented to Marie Strum. The highlight of the April meeting was the report of the Conference in Burlington by our delegate, Mrs. Bessie King. This is how our minutes read, her "report was interesting, but the impressive way that it was given will long be remembered as only 'Aunt Bessie's' Christian spirit and humorous manner could have made it so." Those attending Conference for one day in Burlington were Nannie B. Coghill, Christine Sanford, Lizzie B. Wilson, Lora hort, Mary Yancey and Virginia Richardson.

##### May

Study course, "China-Twilight or Dawn" was given by Mrs. Fitzalan Norwood and Mrs. Lizzie Wilson.

##### June

Sacrificial meal was observed in the home of Mrs. Annie Jones. Mrs. Hazel Harris Nixon of Norfolk led our prayer.

##### July

The ladies had been busy raising funds for a church carpet, which was installed in the church July 7, 1949. Serving on the Rug Committee were, Nannie B. Coghill, Julia Norwood, Lizzie Wilson, and Mary Yancey.

##### August

At this regular meeting, the ladies decided to send Barbara Ann Newton at Mashti School a monthly allowance.

**ANNIVERSARY SERVICE  
TABERNACLE CHURCH  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 29th**

**11:00 o'clock A. M.**

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The public is cordially invited to attend a Special Service at Tabernacle next Sunday, A. M., Commemorating the 10th. Anniversary of the organization of Woman's Society of Christian Service.

Friends of Tabernacle are invited to attend this Service and will have the opportunity of hearing Rev. Dwight A. Petty of Halifax, N. C., who will deliver the principal address.

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**BRING BASKET LUNCH AND ENJOY THE  
FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER AT TABERNACLE**

---

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 29th  
11:00 o'clock A. M.**



## **September**

We were busy on our mission project of helping keep Barbara Ann Newton in Ashti Methodist School in Thomasville, Ga. Our apron with patch donations sewed on helped in this way because they contained \$18.00.

## **October**

Mrs. John Olive Wilson joined our group. Twenty six members were present and a Self Denial Offering amounted to \$30.00.

## **November**

Study on India was held.

## **December**

We held our monthly meeting with each member taking a gift for someone out of the Society whom they wished to remember.

### **1950**

This was the year we purchased and sold church plate pictures for our fund raising projects. In February, Mrs. Annie Jones was presented a gift from the society to be used in her new home. March 1950, Miss Sara Boyd taught a Mission study for us at the home of Mrs. Fitzalan Norwood. Julia Tucker, Mary Harris, and Jackie Adams were visitors for this meeting.

Mrs. Short and Mrs. Coghill were elected delegates to conference to be held in Henderson in June.

In May Christine Samford gave our program topic and Mrs. Julia Tucker gave a most interesting book review on Women of Scripture. Four members, Gladys Norwood, Gallie Twisdale, Virginia Richardson, and Lizzie Wilson had a perfect attendance record for one year.

In June 1950, remember when we were just too eager to do our part in helping celebrate our tenth year of observance of the changing of our name from Missionary Society to Woman's Society of Christian Service when we went as guests to the Union Church at Palmer Springs, Virginia, taking the birthday cake. Our president, Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill, presided at this service in her most gracious manner. The need and possibility of building Sunday School rooms were discussed in 1950. Mrs. Mattie Walston gave a study course on Japan.

Our Sacrificial meal this year was held in the home of Mrs. Mamie Norwood. At the December meeting in 1950 we remembered our pastor, Rev. J.L. Rogers with a Love offering. Mary Frances Strum and Mary Matthews sent a quilt they had made as a special gift to the Methodist Orphanage through the society.

### **1951**

The society met in the Sanctuary of the Church. In March, The Zion Society of Norlina was our guest for this meeting in observance of the tenth anniversary of the changing of the name of the society. Mrs. Nannie Coghill presided and the birthday cake was contributed by the Zion ladies. In May of this year, Mrs. Effie Capps Brewer was presented a Life Membership pin and corsage pinned on by Mrs. Annie Jones. In August 1951 Virginia Watkins joined our group. In December, we remembered our pastor's family (The Rogers) with gifts around the Christmas tree at the Church. Mildred Strum

and Gladys Norwood were hostesses.

#### 1952

In January 1952, Virgie Matthews joined our roll. We still claim her and always call on her even though she does not regularly attend. She stands ready to serve.

Our study of The Book of Acts was our major study in 1952. Mrs. Ma Short with the help of several members gave this study at the home of Mr. Helen Riggan.

On May 17, 1952 a pie and cake sale was held at John Riggan's store, funds received from this were to go toward a building fund for classrooms to be added to the church. A graduation present was sent to Barbara Ann Newton at Vashti School. A Life Membership was presented at the church to Mrs. Minna Norwood with a corsage pinned on by Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill. In June 1952, Fred McFarland was given a donation for helping to organize a choir. Mrs. Amy Rose Norwood was faithfully serving as program chairman from 1950-1954. In October 1952, a Field Day Program by the Soil and Conservation Service was held at Jack Brewer's farm with the ladies of the church serving dinner. This sale was the major fund raising project for the classrooms.

#### 1953

Thirteen members attended Sub-District at Zion Methodist Church. In April Mr. Rogers gave a most interesting mission study.

Our Christmas meeting was at the church. Mrs. Tat Van Dyke was welcomed back into the society. Rev. and Mrs. Wood were remembered with Christmas gifts. Mrs. Twyla Sparrow gave several Christmas selections on her accordian.

#### 1954

In January 1954, Rev. Boone from the Norlina Church talked to the group on child guidance in Christian Living, in the home of Mrs. Fitzalan Norwood. This was the year of newly organizing the Methodist Youth Fellowship of our church. During the early fifties, Mrs. Mattie Walston was steadily guiding us along as Promotion Secretary ever reminding officers of her duties. Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill followed Mrs. Annie Jones as spiritual Life Leader. In June 1954 Julia Brewer and Fitzalan Norwood sang a special duet. In the summer of 1954 we were at work making robes for the choir.

In October Mrs. Mattie Walston and Mrs. Fitzalan Norwood gave the study of "Man and God In The City."

In December Amy Rose Norwood and Julia Brewer sang a duet.

#### 1955

In January we were collecting and saving coupons for our Methodist Orphanage. This year we were invited to Marrow's Chapel for the spring study course and our local project was selling Church stationery. At the February meeting at Mrs. Geraldine Brewer's home, Betty Walker, Irma Van Dyke and Catherine Riggan from the Junior Class gave the program.

In September of this year Don Steck, recently returned from Korea, made a most interesting talk to our ladies on the life of the Korean people. In November of 1955, Bobby Strum talked to our group concerning the

Methodist Youth Fellowship. He asked that we support this organization as results of this meeting. Mrs. Mattie Walston and Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill were appointed first counselors of the M.Y.F.

56

In March Mrs. House, Leader of Children's Work for the Raleigh District was speaker for this cause at the meeting in the home of Mrs. Julia Brewer. This year we were changed from the Rocky Mount District back to the Raleigh District. In April we served the Townsville Lion's Club supper. In October we served the Rock Spring and Bullock Baptist Church a supper. In November 1956 a Life Membership Pin was pinned on Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill and Mrs. Annie Jones.

57

Mr. Wise was our pastor at this time. We attended a study of Japan for the Middleburg charge at Middleburg gym by Mrs. Wise. They, too, were remembered with gifts at Christmas.

58

In February we served a supper for Charles Rose of the Rose Gin and Supply Company. We paid \$175.00 for the refinishing of our floor in the sanctuary.

In November our ladies served a supper to Nutbush and St. Andrews churches, Miss Pattie Lee Coghill and Ruby Coghill of Fuller's Chapel Congregational Christian Church and Cokesbury Methodist Churches respectively gave the study of the Middle East for us, and we helped the M.Y.F. with their Christmas party.

59

In March 1959, Mrs. Bettie Green of the Townsville School Faculty gave a study course for us on the Book of Isaiah. This was the year our church became a station and could claim it's own pastor. Our project was raising funds for the mimeograph machine for the pastor. At Christmas that year our pastor, Mr. Mann, was showered with gifts.

60

We went all out for serving our Methodist Youth Fellowship group a Sunday night supper at the church. Mrs. Nell Burwell graciously helped us with the decorations. Mr. Mann helped us with the study of Luke. This year Mrs. Louise Norwood attended the church conference in Rocky Mount and gave a most interesting report at the July meeting. We attended a study course at Spring Valley Methodist Church and the Sub-District meeting at Rehobeth Methodist Church.

In September, Mrs. John Faulkner, Vance-Warren Sub-District Leader, and Mrs. W. H. Moss, Raleigh District Secretary of Missionary Education gave our program for the month in the home of Mrs. Annie Jones. Our pastor was remembered with gifts at our Christmas meeting in the home of Mrs. Geraldine Brewer.

61

We started making plans to buy a new carpet for our church. Two M. Y. F. members, Byna Adams and Betty Rae Wilson, presented a program for us



mission treasury a total of \$110.00 and gave a total of \$104.11 to our local  
ork. \$500.00 of our local money was in gifts for our church carpet. The total  
st of installing the carpet was \$1,082.00. George Richardson of Hopewell,  
i. has sent us gifts through the years that totaled \$307.00. Other interested  
rsons contributed \$265.00, (non-church members) plus \$224.00 from  
urch members, \$200.00 from the Society Treasury and \$100.00 from the  
urch treasury.

Many deeds of service and kindness not recorded have gone into making  
r society one of service by members not mentioned herein, for no record  
uld be complete enough to include them all. We can mention only a few:

the Cross in our pulpit

the Bible case

the candle sticks, plates, and vases for the table

the altar clothes

the choir robes

curtains for Sunday School rooms and for the parsonage

The list is so incomplete, maybe some of the persons here tonight will add  
her items to make the records more complete.

Through the years, we have had many problems and some differences but  
rough these twenty-five years of service, we feel that we can truly say we  
e the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

**JULY 1963**

**ROLL**

Mrs. Sylvia Anderson

Mrs. Gallie Twisdale

Mrs. Julia Brewer

Mrs. Frankie Walker

Mrs. Geraldine Brewer

Mrs. Mattie Walston

Mrs. Fannie Brewer

Mrs. Lizzie Wilson

Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill

Mrs. Mary Yancey

Mrs. Annie Jones

Mrs. Virginia Watkins

Mrs. Mary Jack Matthews

Mrs. Tat Van Dyke

Mrs. Julia Norwood

Mrs. Betty Hancock

Mrs. Louise Norwood

Mrs. Jeanette Twisdale

Mrs. Gladys Norwood

Mrs. Joan Moody

Mrs. Mamie Norwood

Mrs. Mildred Strum

Mrs. Fitzalan Norwood

Mrs. Alma Stovall

Mrs. Doris Richardson

Mrs. Georgia Tilghman

Mrs. Lora B. Short

Mrs. Fannie Chappin Riggan

Mrs. Myrtle Twisdale



# Tabernacle Methodist WSCS Observes 25th Anniversary

The Woman's Society of Christian Service of Tabernacle Methodist church observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the society Wednesday evening at the home of Mrs. Charlie Norwood in Townsville.

Opening the meeting, Mrs. Richard Norwood, president, read the purpose of the WSCS. Devotions were given by Mrs. Nannie B. Coghill, closing with the Lord's Prayer in unison. Mrs. E. C. Brewer, a former member, sang "How Great Thou Art."

Mrs. Mattie Walston gave a "Remember When?" review of the society's records of the 25 year period. The society was organized in July, 1938 under the guidance of the Rev. and Mrs. D. A. Petty. There were 23 charter members and 12 of this number were present for the observance.

Former members and guests included Mrs. Nina Brooks, Niagara Falls, N. Y.; Mrs. Dorothy Buchanan, Clarkesville, Va.; the Misses Bobbie and Louise Grisom, Kittrell; Mrs. E. C. Brewer, Dabney; Mrs. Bessie Smiley, South Hill, Va. and one new member, Mrs. William McMahan, wife of the new pastor.

Mrs. McMahan led the closing prayer.

During the social hour, the anniversary cake was served by Mrs. Alma Y. Stovall, the society's first president, and punch was served by the present president, Mrs. Norwood.

Goodbyes were said to Mrs. Norwood and the co-hostesses, Mrs. Sylvia Anderson and Mrs. Ronald Hancock.

## HISTORY OF W.S.C.S. AND UMW: 1963 — 1984

In the years from 1963 to the present, the Women's Society of Christian Service (which was changed to United Methodist Women in 1972), has continued the traditions started by the first women of the church. Many years of dedicated service by members have helped the church and the surrounding community while at the same time helping each member grow in their personal relationships with each other and with God. The fellowship that is enjoyed between members is a much needed comfort and support during bad times and good. The following newspaper story from December, 1963 is a good example.

## WSCS Members Entertained At 'Bird Lodge'

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Tilghman entertained members of the Woman's Society of Christian Service of Tabernacle Methodist church and invited guests at their home. "Bird Lodge," Saturday evening at a Christmas meeting.

With Mrs. Richard Norwood presiding, the session was opened with a devotion by Pete Richardson and Shelia Norwood. Mrs. Oliver Brewer, program chairman, then introduced Rev. William McMahan, pastor of the church, who discussed the origin of a number of Christmas carols, with the group singing the carols.

The Tilghman home was decorated with native greens, burning red tapers and poinsettia, along with various holiday scenes.

The hostess and co-hostesses, Mrs. Mattie Walston and Mrs. Virginia Watkins, invited guests into the dining room for refreshments of Russian tea, cake squares, mints and nuts. Assisting in the serving were Mrs. William McMahan and Mrs. Richard Norwood.

Following the social hour, the group assembled around an open fire as Santa Claus appeared with a large sack of gifts for the pastor's family and shut-ins unable to attend the meeting. Mrs. E. C. Norwood and Mrs. Bessie King.

Mrs. William Riggan, church organist, also was remembered with a birthday gift by the hostesses, and the group sang to her birthday greetings.

Articles reprinted courtesy  
of the **Henderson Daily  
Dispatch** Newspaper.

In 1965, discussion began about the possibility of forming a new circle within the Woman's Society of Christian Service specifically for younger aged women in the church and community. At the regular monthly meeting held on Sunday afternoon, August 15th of that year two special guests talked with the women of the church about this possibility. Minutes from this meeting record that Mrs. Wiley Bryan, district president of the North Carolina Conference of the W.S.C.S. and Mrs. Annie Frye, Conference Secretary of Christian Social Relations urged the group to consider this possibility, noting "the responsibilities of the women of the church in forming a separate circle of the W. S. C. S." It was also noted that the pastor, Rev. Carl Davis, expressed his wishes for the young women of the church to take this step, and has given his support to their effort.

Later that year, the young women of the W.S.C.S. decided to form a circle named for the young woman in the story of Ruth by the same name. They noted that the faith and loyalty of this character from the Old Testament would be a guide for the goals of this new circle. From the seven members present at the first meeting, the following officers were elected: President — Boris Richardson, Vice President and Program Chairperson — Faye

Moody, Recording Secretary — Betty Hancock; Treasurer — Sylvia Anderson; and Spiritual Life Leader — Joan Moody.

At about the same time, the older women of the W.S.C.S. decided to call their circle the Bessie King Circle in honor of one of the beloved members of the W.S.C.S. Since that time, each circle meets once a month for a program fellowship, and planning activities. Also, the women of the church meet together once a month for the unit meeting of the United Methodist Women formerly called the Woman's Society of Christian Service.

Just as in 1888 the women of the church held a bazaar and bake sale to raise money to build the new church, so also have the women of Tabernacle continued the long standing tradition of fund-raising projects to help provide accessories and housekeeping expenses for the church and grounds. In 1964 a bake sale was held, one of many that the women of Tabernacle held to raise money. At this particular event, \$42.00 was raised.

In 1964 a cookbook was compiled by members of the W.S.C.S. and sold during 1965 as a fund raising project. In 1966, pens and light bulbs were sold. During the mid-1970's several bazaars were held at Tabernacle with the women donating crafts and baked goods to be sold with the profit going into the United Methodist Women treasury. In 1977, the UMW co-sponsored the first of three chicken suppers with the men of the church. The men did the cooking and the women served the large crowd which gathered for the occasion. In 1979 a farm meeting was catered by the United Methodist Women as a money-making project. In 1980, a basketball game was played between Rock Spring Baptist and Tabernacle United Methodist churches and baked goods were sold at the game.

In 1982, the Ruth Circle sponsored the first community birthday calendar as a fund-raising project. This project has become an annual means of raising funds as well as providing an excellent service to our community. Also in 1982, the United Methodist Women made a quilt. Members of both circles cooperated by contributing individual squares which were then assembled under the direction of Sandy Tillotson. The quilt was then sold by silent bid. A number of bids were received. Norwood Dixon Twisdale purchased the quilt for \$1101.50. During the past year of 1983, the UMW arranged for church directories to be made by the Olan Mills Photography Company and given to members as a service project, and bicentennial plates of the church buildings picturing were sold as a money-making project.

Funds raised over the years have been put to good use. For example, proceeds from the bake sale held in 1964 were used to send Joyce Brewer to the Youth Caravan in Indiana that year. During other years, the United Methodist Women have paid for the cost of installing carpet in the sanctuary of the church, purchased shrubs for the church yard, purchased curtains for the fellowship hall and some of the Sunday School classrooms, purchased vacuum cleaners and housekeeping supplies for the church as needed, purchased a film screen and slide projector for church use, and purchased

brary books for the church library. The women of the church have also taken responsibility for keeping the church kitchen stocked with paper cups, apkins, etc. A schedule for cleaning the church is also coordinated by the United Methodist Women: each woman in the church is responsible for cleaning the church sanctuary and other rooms one or two weeks during each year.

During the past year of 1983-84, the United Methodist Women have purchased a new communion table and new paraments for use in the chancel area of the sanctuary building. The UMW also paid for the cost of materials to make liturgical banners for the sanctuary. One of the members of the UMW, Geraldine Brewer, supervised the making of the six banners. In addition, members of the two circles of the UMW cooperated in making a special bicentennial banner which was displayed at a special festival for the bicentennial held at West Point on the Eno River Park in Durham as well as at the session of the 1984 North Carolina Annual Conference.

In these and many other ways the women of Tabernacle Church have offered themselves in service as a "society of Christian service." Over the years, numerous service projects have been undertaken. Some of these were short-term projects such as an Easter egg hunt and Christmas party given for the children at the Butner unit for retarded children in 1969. In December 1970, the Ruth Circle decided to establish a library for the church. They decided to name the library "The Mattie Walston Library" in honor of Mrs. Mattie Walston, a long-time member of Tabernacle Church and an active leader in the W.S.C.S. and the United Methodist Women until her death in 1982. One of the members of the UMW, Alice Wilson, serves as church librarian. Over the years, the library has been given several hundred books, supplying our members with a number of very good resources for study, learning and pleasure.

Other projects, once started, have become annual projects by members of the United Methodist Women. A set of Chrismon ornaments were made by members of the Ruth Circle in 1976 and a program was presented just before Christmas that year during a Sunday morning worship service. Since that time, the Ruth Circle has made another set of "cross-stitched" Chrismons and continues to provide the Christmas tree for the sanctuary each year during the season of Advent. On Mother's Day and Father's Day, the women of the church honor one particular mother or father. In addition, in recent years, "Mother-Daughter" Banquets have been held just before Mother's Day each year.

One of the highlights over the past years has been the "Secret Pal Suppers" held each November. The women of the Ruth Circle select older members of the community to remember in special ways during the next year. During the year each member of the Ruth Circle sends greeting cards, food and other remembrances to her "secret pal". Then, at Thanksgiving time, all the "secret pals" are treated to a special meal and gift along with a lot of fun and fellowship. On that occasion, the "secret pals" try to guess which member of the Ruth Circle has been their special friend during the





**Secret Pal Supper, November 1983**



**Chrismon Tree: Christmas, 1976**



st year. Most members of the Ruth Circle are by now good enough at keeping their deeds secret that very few of the "secret pals" are able to detect who has been their special friend. At the close of the evening the secrets are revealed, joy shared, and new "secret pals" are drawn out of a box of names for the coming year.

Each circle of the UMW takes responsibility to send greetings and encouragement to the sick and shut in members of our church and community, made possible by a "Sunshine Fund" kept by each circle. In addition, members of the Bessie King Circle have an annual day of visitation in which several members go together to visit shut-in members of the community bringing small gifts and cheer to lives darkened by illness and isolation. The Ruth Circle has a monthly program of "Caring and Sharing" through which members adopt a person or family to show their love and concern for by providing meals and other needs at least once a week during the coming month. In these and other ways, members of the two circles of the United Methodist Women continue the heritage of Christian service as a society of women dedicated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Other annual projects of the United Methodist Women include giving a dinner and money to a needy family at Thanksgiving and Christmas, taking special offerings on the days set aside for special reflection and concern (Day of Prayer and Self Denial, World Thank Offering, etc.), and regular contribution to missions through the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. For a number of years, the women of our church have pledged to contribute \$25.00 each quarter of the year to the missions of our denomination through the Women's Division. In addition, this past year of 1984, the United Methodist Women contributed 100.00 to the Andean Rural Health Project of Bolivia after having had a slide presentation and program on that mission project of the United Methodist Church. Members of the UMW also had a program presented by missionaries on furlough from Japan during the past year.

From time to time, "mission studies" have been done by the women of Tabernacle. Using materials promoted by the Women's Division, guest teachers or members of the local unit lead such studies of mission, the Bible and spirituality as may help the women better serve as a "society of Christian service." One such study, held in 1964, was entitled "The Three Spiritual Classics" and was taught by Mattie Walston, Lizzie Wilson and Frankie Walker.

In 1979, a special memorial service was held at Tabernacle to honor charter members of the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the United Methodist Women. The Bessie King Circle made the presentation along with the officers of the United Methodist Women. The words used in the presentation for that day offered a fitting tribute to the society of women at Tabernacle who first initiated the work of Christian service more than forty-one years before.

"This is an occasion to remember, to recognize and to celebrate the gifts God has given our sisters in the faith. This particular moment we give with joy in recalling how God has blessed us through those who have gone to their eternal reward. Each of us thinks now of a special person, but, together we recall faith, we recall hope, and we recall caring. Thanks be to God for such women.

What we are celebrating here, really, is the beauty in those lives. Today we symbolize that beauty with the strength of the white carnation. The names of the deceased will be called and someone representing that person will place a flower in the vase on the altar.

As each flower is placed among the freshness of the green, the symbol of everlasting life, we shall be acknowledging before God, our appreciation for that life. The truth is — these flowers are symbols that will fade, but because we have seen their beauty, we shall in our own lives plant new flowers. Now it is our task to become God's gift of beauty, of love, and of faith to those around us. Thus God's gift is still alive.

Mrs. John Brewer  
Mrs. Willie Brewer  
Miss Alice Coghill  
Mrs. Annie Grissom  
Mrs. Henrietta Hight  
Mrs. B.W. Jones  
Mrs. Bessie King  
Mrs. Richard Matthews  
Mrs E.C. Norwood  
Mrs. Sallie Short  
Mrs. John Yancey

"We here at Tabernacle are fortunate to have many Charter Members still actively engaged in our church work. Their lives show us how faith and trust in God can bring about a truly full life. These faithful women we will honor with a red carnation. Sherri Franklin as UMW President will present them as their names are called."

Mrs. Gene Brewer	Mrs. Alma Stovall
Mrs. Bobbie Grissom Ellis	Mrs. C.G. Strum
Mrs. Mary Matthews	Mrs. Mildred Strum
Mrs. Gladys Norwood	Mrs. Myrtle Twisdale
Mrs. Lora Short	Mrs. L.V. Wilson
Mrs. Bessie Smiley	Mrs. John Wilson

The following persons have served as Chairpersons of the Bessie King Circle since the circle was formed in 1965. In all cases, these persons have served at least two years and some have served more than two years in this

capacity.

Frankie Walker

Lizzie Wilson

Tat Van Dyke

Geraldine Brewer

Mildred Strum

Julia Brewer

Julia Norwood

Alice Wilson

At present, Eleanor Frantz serves as chairperson of the circle and is serving her second year in that capacity.

The Ruth Circle has had a number of chairpersons since it was formed in 1965.

Doris Richardson	1965-1967
Jeanette Twisdale	1968-1969
Betty Hester	1970-1971
Bettye Jo Twisdale	1972-1974
Rita Clark	1975-1976
Anne Howell	1977-1978
Sarah Norwood	1979-1980
Deborah Twisdale	1981-1982
Cathy Nowell, Anna Walker	1983
Anna Walker	1984

The present officers of the UMW are: President-Jeanette Twisdale, Vice-President and Program Chairman-Anne Howell, Recording Secretary-Sarah Norwood, Treasurer-Julia Brewer. A number of women have served as officers over the years and provided the leadership needed.

Currently, members of the UMW are:

Sylvia Anderson	Odell Pulley
Geraldine Brewer	Doris Richardson
Julia Brewer	Eloise Richardson
Mary Cartwright	Frances Sherfey
Fran Casto	Debra Smiley
Helen Casto	Dottie Sparrow
Rita Clark	Mildred Strum
Dorothy DePotie	Sandy Tillotson
Sandra Ellington	Bettye Twisdale
Eleanor Frantz	Gallie Twisdale
Anne Howell	Jeanette Twisdale
Phyllis McCord	Tat Van Dyke
Gladys Norwood	Anna Walker
Julia Norwood	Frankie Walker
Louise Norwood	Virginia Watkins
Sarah Norwood	Alice Wilson
Nancy O'Geary	Lizzie Wilson

—Compiled by Eloise Richardson





**Members of the Ruth Circle: 1981**







**Members of the Ruth Circle: 1981**



**Members of the Bessie King Circle: 1981**





**Christmas Party: Bessie King Circle  
Tat Van Dyke and Geraldine Brewer**



**Christmas Party: Bessie King Circle  
Dorothy De Potie opens her gift**





**Secret Pals: Deborah Twisdale and Nannie B. Coghill**



**The Calendar and the Workers  
Anna Walker and Eloise Richardson**





**Tat Van Dyke working on UMW Quilt**



**The Finished Product: UMW Quilt**



# CHAPTER EIGHT

## MAKING HISTORY TOGETHER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

As Tabernacle Church and its membership entered the twentieth century, the community of Townsville was still struggling toward becoming an established community. Although the actual address for our church during the early part of this century was "Woodsworth, North Carolina," Tabernacle has always been related to the community of Townsville, four miles northwest of the church. Miss Sara Boyd provides some perspective on the situation of our community in this period.

In the year of 1899, Mr. J.J. White opened a general merchandise store and in 1902 Mr. J. Knott opened a store in the oak grove to the left of the old depot. In 1904 a public school was built...Mr. Vincent Adams opened a drug store here in 1905.

In 1906, Mr. Sam Adams moved here and opened a store...The Township in 1910, voted a bond issue for roads. In winter the roads had been impassable, and there was never a time that they were in good condition. In 1911, two warehouses were constructed. They were run for several years. A box factory was built in 1912, and it caused the town to be progressive.

The west end of Townsville was by far the most businesslike part. Holy Trinity, the Episcopal Church, was built in 1914. In 1915, the bank was founded, and it helped to develop Townsville as much as any other one thing.

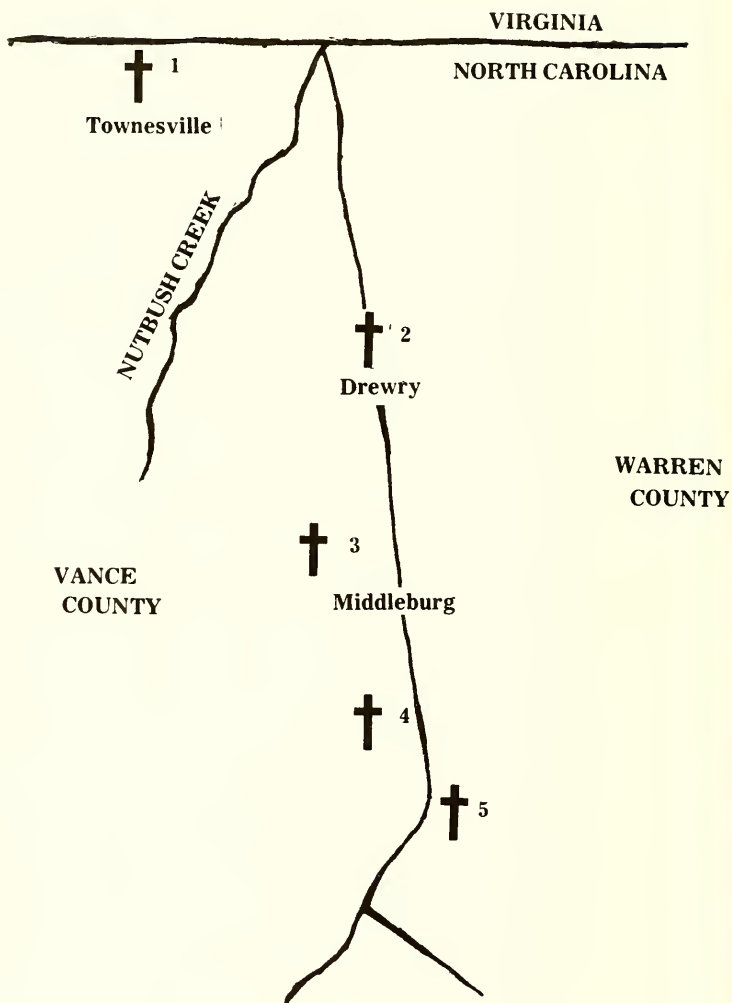
Townsville was incorporated in 1915. Two years later a new drug store was built. In 1918, the Roanoke River Railroad, formerly the Roanoke Valley Railroad, was doing nicely. One morning in April as the train passed over Big Creek Bridge, the framework was not strong enough and the bridge fell in...<sup>1</sup>

As the account by Miss Boyd illustrates, during the early years of the twentieth century the community of Townsville was experiencing a measure of progress. But like the train that ran into Big Creek because the framework was not strong enough, the progress which was made during the early years of this century was not destined to be permanent.

### THE MIDDLEBURG CIRCUIT: 1919 to 1959

In 1919, Tabernacle Church was placed in a new charge alignment with our other churches: Middleburg, Cokesbury, Drewry and Shocco. The minutes of the North Carolina Conference for 1919 note this change with these words: "Take Middleburg and Tabernacle from the Ridgeway Circuit and Cokesbury and Shocco from the Warren Circuit and create a new charge to be known as the Middleburg Circuit."<sup>2</sup> Drewry Church appears to have

# MIDDLEBURG CIRCUIT 1919-1959



## MIDDLEBURG CIRCUIT LEGEND

1. Tabernacle Methodist Church
2. Drewry Methodist Church
3. Middleburg Methodist Church
4. Cokesbury Methodist Church
5. Shocco Methodist Church

een added to the charge for a very short while after the above mentioned action by the North Carolina conference. The parsonage for the circuit was located at Middleburg. Over the next forty years that the five churches were assigned to the same circuit, relations between the five congregations appear to have been good despite what some pastors and many laypeople considered to be a geographically ill-located circuit.<sup>3</sup>

Several factors seemed to have worked together during the 1930s and afterward to nurture the good relationships between the congregations on the Middleburg Circuit. First, for a while in the late 1930s, the Reverend Dwight A. Petty published a newsletter or magazine for the circuit called "The Messenger." This publication was printed on glossy paper and was filled with news of the activities of the local Methodist churches as well as news of the happenings in the district, conference, nation and world Methodism. Second, while Petty and his wife were serving the Middleburg Circuit, they helped organize local chapters of the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Women from the local churches would come together for meetings of this organization at the subdistrict and district level for fellowship, study and service. Finally, there were a number of family ties between several of the churches. These factors, as well as others, worked together to create harmonious and cooperative relationships in the work of the Middleburg Circuit.

During the period of time that Tabernacle Church was assigned to the Middleburg Circuit, much was happening in the world. World War One, the Depression, World War Two, and the Korean War all took their toll on the membership of Tabernacle Church and the community of Townsville, as well as surrounding communities. The fortunes of tobacco farmers continued to rise and fall with frustrating irregularity and unpredictability.

The same year that the Middleburg Circuit was formed, the price of tobacco hit its peak after a period of gradual rise following the crash of 1893. Suddenly everyone who could grow tobacco did so. It said that doctors and lawyers had their own little tobacco patch in the year of 1920. Of course, this created too large a supply, eventuating in the surplus of tobacco in later years. This brought on the need for price controls and other interventions by the federal government during and after the Depression years. Even those farmers who had previously grown cotton or other crops had shifted to tobacco during the 1920s. During the hard years of the depression some farmers made ends meet by curing tobacco in Canada in the months after their own crops or the crops of others they worked for were harvested and cured.

World War Two and the Korean War took some from the Townsville area as young men and women found jobs or careers in the armed services. In later years, some of these sons and daughters would return, but many found jobs elsewhere and came home when they could. As with communities all across the country and world, the twentieth century has been a time of disruption and re-orientation for the people of the Townsville Township. When the textile mills in the area opened up, this provided some oppor-

tunities for work for persons who could no longer make farming their livelihood. Similarly, when the nearby Tungsten mine opened, this provided some measure of progress, however temporary for the community. But soon, the mine shut down and the jobs were gone. With little alternative but to seek work as nearby as possible, men and women in the community obtained jobs in Clarksville or Henderson. Some would move to be closer to their jobs. Others stayed home and commuted to work.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Kerr Lake was being built, disruption and orientation of a different sort took place. The lake cut Townsville off from communities like Drewry and Middleburg to the East, and from Boynton and Palmer Springs to the North and Northeast. Because of this, Townsville became more isolated in some senses. Yet, at the same time, the lake brought recreational opportunities and vacationers into the area seeking a respite from the business of lives lived elsewhere. Before long, the lake attracted vacationers for longer periods of time, some choosing to make their summer home in this area. During the sixties, seventies, and eighties people from other areas began moving to this area to retire or start a second or third phase of their life.

All of these factors working together brought about significant changes in the communities surrounding Kerr Lake. The lake displaced many families from property. Many farmers had to re-locate or seek other employment. The year of 1953 was a bad year for tobacco farmers because of a long drought. This added to the problem, forcing still others to seek employment in the nearby mills during the years to follow. The Tungsten mine which had earlier opened and closed, would re-open for a short while in the 1960s, only to close again. Life in communities such as Townsville was filled with change.

During the decade of the 1950s, Tabernacle Church was thriving despite adverse circumstances for some of its membership. In 1953, four Sunday School classrooms were added at the rear of the church sanctuary. This addition would enable the Sunday Church School to grow to a peak enrollment of 110 members during the middle years of that decade. Later, in 1957, a porch was added to the front of the sanctuary, further extending the church's space and the possibilities for fellowship before and after worship on Sunday mornings as well as at other times. At the end of the decade, the Reverend Wilford Wise led the effort to divide the Middleburg Circuit. This effort was not met with universal approval, but it did succeed. One reason for its success may have been the simple fact that the new lake had put another obstacle in the path of the churches' ministry on the circuit. For instance the distance between Tabernacle Church and Drewry Church was more than doubled as a result of Kerr Lake coming into the area.

When the decision was made for the circuit to be re-aligned in 1959, Tabernacle Church gave its share in the parsonage at Middleburg to Drewry Church, one of the smaller of the churches remaining on the circuit. The value of Tabernacle's share (established by membership in each church) was just over \$970.00. The Administrative Board at Tabernacle determined that this





**Vacation Church School scenes from 1960s.  
Frankie Walker, Betty Rae Norwood and children**



**Vacation Church School scenes from 1960s.  
Leaders: Linda Twisdale and Betty Walker and children**

was simply "the right thing to do" given the prospective division of the circuit. The fact that this matter was handled in the way that it was testifies the spirit of connectional support present in the Middleburg Circuit at the time of the re-alignment.

During the period of time that Tabernacle Church was part of the Middleburg Circuit, the following persons served as pastors of the circuit.

Eff David Dodd	1919—1923
Jesse T. Draper	1923—1927
Preston D. Woodall	1927—1932
J. Herbert Miller, Sr.	1932—1934
James A. Dailey	1934—1936
Dwight A. Petty	1936—1940
Thomas W. Lee	1940—1946
Lloyd C. Brothers	1946—1950
Harry L. Rogers	1950—1953
John E. Wood	1953—1955
Wilford D. Wise	1955—1959

The average tenure of each pastor during this era in our church's history was just under four years.

#### **TABERNACLE CHURCH, STUDENT APPOINTMENT: 1959 to 1974**

On July 1, 1959, Tabernacle Church received as its pastor a seminary student named Milton Mann. By action of the North Carolina Annual Conference Session of 1959, the Middleburg Circuit had been divided and Tabernacle had been made a station charge with a student pastor assigned to serve it. As part of the arrangement for pastoral support, the North Carolina Conference provided one half of the salary for the new pastor from a special fund used to enable churches to work toward self-support of its pastoral ministry. During the first year, then, Tabernacle received \$1200.00 from the Conference and contributed the same amount itself in salary support for the new pastor. Over a period of five years, Tabernacle gradually assumed the full burden of responsibility for pastoral support.

For the next fifteen years, Tabernacle Church would be served by seminary students attending Duke Divinity School in Durham, NC. In addition to working toward full support of the pastor's salary, the church also had to make arrangements for a residence for the pastor and his family. From 1959 to 1963, the pastors lived in an apartment in the home of Carl and Christine Brewer Samford on Highway 39 between Townsville and Williamsboro. In 1962, construction was begun on a parsonage located in Townsville on a lot purchased from Mr. Robert B. Taylor for \$500.00 (Mr. Taylor made a donation of \$250.00 to this effort). The parsonage was constructed at a cost of \$9585.00. L. Thurman Watkins and Phillip Hunt served as the contractors for this project. After a well was drilled and furniture purchased for the new parsonage, the total cost of the dwelling was \$12005.00. Later in 1966, a carport was constructed as an addition to the parsonage at a cost of \$1100.00. Aaron and Emma Lou Moss moved into the new parsonage.

January 1963 as the first family to live in the residence. The parsonage was paid off shortly afterward.

Through the decade of the 1960s, seminary students served Tabernacle Church for one or two years before graduating from Duke Divinity School and continuing their ministry elsewhere as full-time ministers. During this period, the following persons served as pastors of Tabernacle Church.

Milton Mann	1959—1961
Aaron Moss	1961—1963
Julian Weisner	1963—1964
William F. McMahan	1964—1965
Earl Davis	1965—1967
Henry Lovelace	1967—1974

#### **THE TABERNACLE — MARROW'S CHAPEL CHARGE: 1974—1983**

At the time of the 1974 North Carolina Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church\*, Tabernacle Church was yoked with Marrow's Chapel United Methodist Church as a "two-point" charge with the Reverend Henry Lovelace appointed to serve the two churches as full-time pastor. Lovelace had graduated from seminary earlier that year. Being well-loved by the congregation of Tabernacle Church, Lovelace would continue to serve Tabernacle as part of the new charge alignment until 1978. Lovelace's tenure of eleven years is the longest of any pastor in the history of the congregation.

During the latter part of Lovelace's term as pastor, the church decided to build an addition to the existing building. The congregation voted on September 5, 1976, to construct a fellowship building. That same day, Charles McAdams, Treasurer of the North Carolina Conference, was the Guest Speaker. Pledges and subscriptions were taken to raise the majority of the funds needed for the cost of the building. The Tabernacle Fellowship Building was completed in September 1977, at a total cost of \$40,162.11. An amount of \$10,000.00 was borrowed to supplement the amount raised through special gifts and offerings. This debt was paid off in three years. At the time this building project was completed, Ronald Anderson was Chairman of the Administrative Board, and Tom Howell served as Chairman of the Building Committee. John Franklin was the contractor for the building. A plaque placed in the fireplace hearth of the Fellowship Hall reads:

This building is dedicated to all our members and friends who sacrificed toward the cost of construction of \$40,000.00 and to the memory of Jack Brewer who sowed the initial seed.

Currently, this building houses the fellowship hall on the top floor and three classrooms and the pastor's study on the bottom floor. When the fellowship building was constructed, one of the classrooms in the old building was made into a kitchen which opens onto the fellowship hall for ease in serving food and refreshments at our fellowship suppers. The

\*In 1967 the Methodist Church and the United Evangelical Brethren Church were united in one denomination thereafter called "The United Methodist Church".



fellowship hall has also made it possible for our church to host civic groups such as the Townsville Lions Club.

Since 1977, numerous other improvements have been made in our church facilities. New carpet was purchased and installed in the sanctuary. A new heating and air conditioning system was installed, and an awning has been installed at the side entrance to the basement of the fellowship building. Our facilities are well maintained and adequate for the current needs of our congregation.

### **TABERNACLE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP**

So far as we know, the first youth fellowship was organized in 1955 under the pastorate of Rev. Wilford Wise. Mattie Walston and Nannie B. Coghill were the first counselors. Bobby Strum was instrumental in organizing the group. Denny C. Wise and Betty Rae Norwood were members of the youth group and attended a youth conference at Duke during this period. Rev. Milton Mann was active in leading the youth group in the early 1960s. Joyce Brewer was an active member of the youth group and participated in district and conference activities for youth. In 1964, Joyce attended the Youth Caravan held in Indiana.

During the pastorate of Henry Lovelace, the youth group was re-organized after a period of inactivity. In 1976, the youth were organized into a Senior United Methodist Youth Fellowship led by Jeff and Sandra Richardson, and a Junior United Methodist Youth Fellowship led by Phyllis Rapier (McCord) and Sarah Norwood. One of the activities of the youth in 1976 was to attend the rally at Duke University celebrating the American bicentennial. The youth carried a banner made by Nancy Knott in the procession of churches. That banner currently hangs in the youth classroom in our church.

In September of 1983, the Community Youth Fellowship was organized for youth in the Townsville area. Anna Walker and Michael G. Cartwright are counselors for this group. During its first year, the Community Youth Fellowship has had several progressive dinners, programs on such issues as capital punishment, world hunger, and personal responsibility, and outdoor activities such as sailing. The Community Youth Fellowship participated in the first Vance County CROP Walk for Hunger, raising some \$617.00. The group has made plans to participate in the 1984 CROP Walk as well.

Tabernacle Youth currently participating in the Community Youth Fellowship:

Susan Hester  
Thomas Hester  
Melanie Howell  
Renee Moody  
Kim Norwood  
Mitch Norwood  
Lezah Sparrow





**Junior United Methodist Youth Fellowship: 1976**  
**Counselors: Phyllis Rapier and Sarah Norwood**

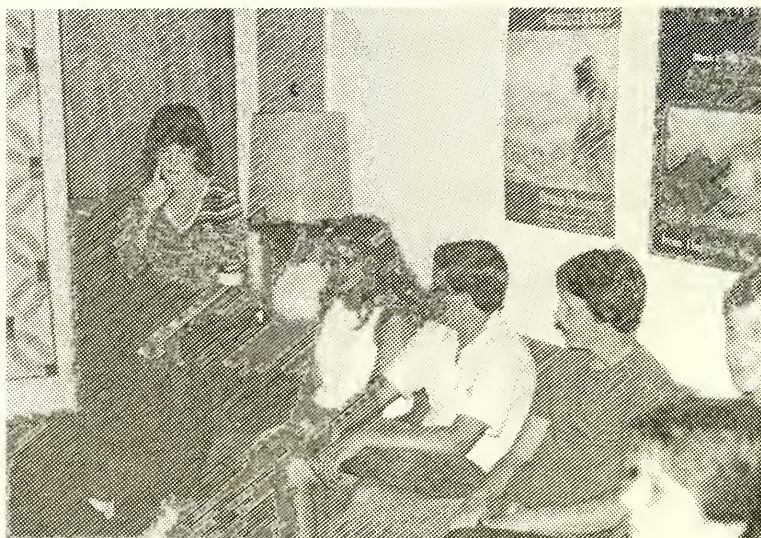


**Senior United Methodist Youth Fellowship: 1976**  
**Counselors: Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Richardson**





**Community Youth Fellowship in 1984**  
**Anna Walker: Counselor**



**Community Youth Fellowship in 1984**



**Homecoming 1976: Dinner on the Grounds**

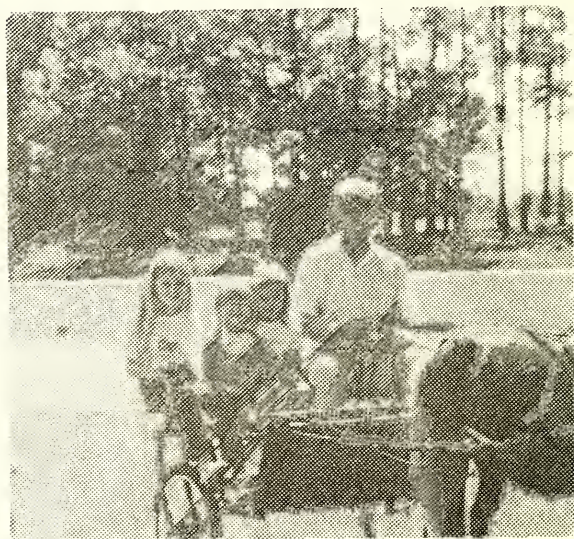


**Homecoming 1976: Singing on the Grounds**





**Maundy Thursday Communion  
Rev. Henry Lovelace and Congregation**



**Raymond Wilson and Children in Buggy**





**Children on Palm Sunday, 1981**



**Macon Twisdale and Skeeter Clark cooking breakfast: 1983**





**Vacation Church School, 1982**  
**Alice Wilson and children with "Buzzy Bee"**



**Vacation Church School, 1982**  
**Jeanette Twisdale and children**

## **TABERNACLE STATION CHARGE: 1983 —**

In June of 1983, Michael G. Cartwright was appointed pastor of a newly created station charge: Tabernacle United Methodist Church. During the latter months of Robert Horton's pastorate, both Tabernacle and Marrow's Chapel desired to become independently supporting churches or "stations," as such appointments are called in the United Methodist tradition. With the assistance of the Rev. Dr. Charles Mercer, Durham District Superintendent, both churches were able to achieve this goal. Tabernacle was helped in this direction by the support it received from the Equitable Salary Support program of the North Carolina Conference. During the first year as a station charge, Tabernacle Church received some \$3250.00 in such support from the North Carolina Conference. By the same token Tabernacle Church has made impressive steps toward assuming full responsibility for its ministry by reducing the amount of salary support it receives from the conference.

Since "going station", Tabernacle has taken steps to insure that in future years the church will continue to be an independently supporting church. This past year, the Finance Committee has adopted a "line-item" budget for the church's expenditures. Each month the Administrative Council studies a report from the treasurer and notes in what area expenditures have been made, approves other expenditures, and makes adjustments in the budgetary planning of the church. In addition, last fall, the Administrative Council took an afternoon and evening to do some planning for the program and ministry of the church in both the short range and in the longer term as well. Such changes as these have meant that the leaders of our church have had to work hard in order to provide for the ministries of our church.

Perhaps the most common comment during the past year has been "Not another meeting!" Indeed, there have been meetings as we have planned and evaluated opportunities for ministry and fellowship in our church. Tabernacle has begun taking steps to "reach out" in our community. During the past year, we have re-activated a ministry which had once been performed during the pastorate of Henry Lovelace. We have given our lay speakers responsibility for the "lake ministry" of our church at Henderson Point Campground on Kerr Lake. Each week during the summer one of our lay speakers goes out to the lake to conduct a Sunday morning worship experience in the informal atmosphere of the outdoors. This renewed ministry has been received well, and we believe that it is a significant ministry to be performed.

We have "reached out" in other ways to those around us. In addition to providing the Sunday morning worship service at Henderson Point on Kerr Lake, we have consciously sought to involve residents living on or near Kerr Lake in our church's ministries and fellowship activities. Our church has also sponsored a "community youth fellowship" for the youth in the Townsville area churches. Anna Walker serves as the counselor for this group. Similarly, Tabernacle has reached out in an **ecumenical** fashion by initiating joint "Fifth Sunday Community Worship Services" with Rock Spring Baptist, Nutbush Presbyterian, and Holy Trinity Episcopal churches.



We continue to be enriched by the sharing of the ministries which God has committed into our care as members of the Townsville community and residents of the area on the west side of Kerr Lake.

As Tabernacle United Methodist Church enters its **third** century as a congregation in ministry, we are increasingly aware of the challenges which lie before us. Aware of the rich heritage which lies in our past, we are seeking to be open to the future which God has for us as a congregation in ministry for Christ. In past years in the company of other congregations we have sought to serve God while part of circuits and charges. Now we are trying to serve God as a “station charge” still in the company of other churches, yet also taking on the burden of supporting our own ministry. It is yet a **goal** toward which we are moving. Yet like the goals which have been achieved in our past, we will also reach this goal, **by God’s grace and according to God’s purpose for us as the people of God at Tabernacle.**

**Pastors who have served Tabernacle Church since 1974:**

Henry Lovelace	(1967- ) 1974-1978
Douglas Lamb	1978-1981
Robert Horton	1981-1983
Michael G. Cartwright	1983-



**Tabernacle United Methodist Church**



## CHAPTER NINE

### STORIES AND REMEMBRANCES

The kind of stories that a community of faith tells and re-tells say a great deal about what is important to that congregation. Those who tell the stories have an important role in handing down the tradition of the congregation to the next generation. Those who hear the stories learn something crucial about what it means to be a member of that congregation. Each church family has different stories to tell because the presence of God has been felt in different ways; God has worked through the lives of very different people, and the Spirit of God has been incarnated in the faces and bodies of people known within the congregation as “Aunt Mattie” and “Uncle Boyd”, “Daddy Jake” and “Miss Bessie”. The memories of such people as these must be recalled to mind again and again as “living reminders” of God’s grace, reminding us of the possibility of becoming windows of that heavenly grace ourselves.<sup>2</sup>

Jacob Edward Riggan was born December 25, 1894, on the Riggan family farm two miles from Tabernacle Methodist Church. He was the son of John J. and Lora Lemay Riggan. His mother died when he was small so he was reared by his grandmother, Mrs. Martha Rideout Riggan. She was a very strong person and saw to it that Jacob and his brothers and sisters attended Tabernacle Church and school regularly. They walked to Tabernacle with their grandmother for worship services. Upon returning home, after lunch, they all had to sit down and learn Bible verses before they could go out and play.

At a very early age, Jacob found God to be very important to him. He joined Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1908. Rev. Berzillai C. Allred baptized him. Jacob filled many positions of leadership in the church including being Superintendent of the Sunday School, Sunday School Secretary and Church Treasurer and Steward.

Jacob was married to Martha Flora Henderson in October 1915. She would later die on April 11, 1948. Jacob Riggan was a devoted husband and father. Next to his family, his love was directed to his church. As long as he lived, Jacob Riggan knew the Bible well and could quote Scripture passages he had learned as a child.. Among his favorite pasttimes were baseball and reading his newspaper. After completing his education in the small one room schools in the Townsville area, Jacob enrolled at Massey’s Business College in Richmond, Virginia. He always excelled in mathematics. When his father died on November 25, 1914, Jacob came home and did not return to college.

Jacob Riggan died July 3, 1960, on a Sunday morning, having attended Tabernacle Church the previous Sunday. As long as he lived, Jacob attended church regularly, kept up with current events and loved baseball. At the time of his death, Jacob was a member of the Administrative Board at



**Cemetary at back of Tabernacle Church**



**Mattie Walston, Mary Jack Matthews and Nannie B. Coghill  
"Living Reminders"**



Tabernacle Methodist Church, serving as a Steward in addition to being a member of the Stewardship and Finance Committee.

Written by his daughter, Frankie Riggan Walker

Fannie Chappin Harris Riggan (born Dec. 15, 1913, died Feb. 8, 1965) was the pianist at Tabernacle Church from 1940 to 1965. Fannie was born and reared near Rock Springs Baptist Church, Townsville, where she was a member until she married William L. Riggan on February 5, 1934. A few months later, she joined Tabernacle Methodist Church and served there until her death.

Fannie began her training in piano at about age eight. After her father died, she and her sister and brother lived with their Aunt Mary Bell Harris, who encouraged Fannie to learn to play so she could play at her church, Tabernacle. She took lessons from a neighbor, Miss Helen Kimball (Barnes), who taught her for several years and let Fannie practice on her own piano. This early training started Fannie toward what became her hobby, her contribution to Tabernacle Church and her favorite form of relaxation. She did have other hobbies and talents for things such as sewing, crocheting, but singing and playing the piano were always her main pleasures.

Fannie Riggan loved Tabernacle and the people who made it such a pleasant place in which to serve our Lord. Several times she was told that she should be given a key to the church so she could lock the doors as she left because she was almost always one of the very last ones to leave after worship services on Sunday. She simply liked to visit and talk with everyone present.

Written by Johnny Riggan

Mattie Pearl Brewer Walston was born on April 1, 1889, in Vance County, North Carolina. She was the daughter of Virginia Elliott Brewer and Edward Byron Brewer. She attended Woodworth School (near Tabernacle Church) beginning in 1894 and afterward studied at Louisburg College from 1909-1912, receiving the A.B. degree in English literature. On April 16, 1916, Mattie was married to Lemuel G. Walston at Edenton Street Methodist Parsonage in Raleigh, N.C. During her lifetime, Mrs. Walston served as a public school teacher in Wayne, Wake and Vance Counties in North Carolina, and was a lifelong member of Tabernacle Methodist Church. Her husband, Lemuel, died May 2, 1935, at Drewry, N.C. "Aunt Mattie" as Mrs. Walston was known to our congregation, died June 2, 1980 and was buried in the cemetery at Tabernacle Church.

In her 89th year, Aunt Mattie wrote a brief history of the Brewer family upon request from a member of the family. After laboring with the task (and enjoying it), she made this comment, "This business of tracing family history is like rolling a snow ball down a hill; it gets bigger at every turn but I have enjoyed it. It was a labor of love for all of you".

In view of the fact that the library at Tabernacle has been named for "Aunt Mattie", we want to share a portion of the history she wrote:

I must mention this because it has influenced my life ever since. Uncle "Shack", Thornton Algernon Brewer, would often send me "goodies", candy, fruit, etc., from his home in Mecklenburg County, Virginia. One day he sent a book by relatives, titled, **Bible Stories and What They Teach Us**. It was written in simple form with black and white pictures, and that is where I learned my first Bible Stories.

I started to school when I was five years old with a linen A-B-C Book with pictures in a one room school building, "Woodsworth School", located on property joining Tabernacle Church.

In 1910, after taking an entrance exam, I entered the Sophomore Class of Louisburg Junior College. I was a little awkward, green-horn country girl with a lot of things to learn. After getting adjusted, I loved everyone, and everything there. It wasn't always "peaches," though. I learned how to get along with people. English Composition was always my "long suit," so finally in May 1912, I graduated with an A.B. Degree, "Major English." The subject of my thesis was "In the Land of the Dykes."

I shall always be grateful to the ones who made it possible for me to go to a Christian School. I learned so much — not included in the books — from the association with the nice Christian teachers and students there."

Mattie Brewer Walston was the youngest of a family of eight children, all of whom were life time members of Tabernacle Church. Mattie's older sister, Ruth Brewer, served as a kindergarten teacher for more than thirty years and her brother, Boyd Brewer, served as Sunday School superintendent for many years. (Mrs. Walston's niece, Lizzie Brewer Wilson, has served as the church historian for many years and a nephew, Oliver Brewer has served as treasurer of Tabernacle Church for forty-two years.)

A short while after her husband's death in 1935, Aunt Mattie returned to her home community here in Townsville from Drewry, N.C. She and her brother, "Uncle Boyd" Brewer, lived just across the street from Tabernacle Church. From then on, "the Church" was her life. Many members can recall her faithfulness to her church. Aunt Mattie served as a teacher in the Adult Class for many years, was a leader in all the missionary work and study groups for the Ladies of the Church and the unofficial hostess for Tabernacle Church. She especially enjoyed welcoming each new minister and ever reminding them to "look in the Methodist Discipline" for guidance.

Compiled and written by:  
Lizzie Wilson and Betty Rae Wilson Norwood



One of the stories that "Aunt Mattie" Walston preserved is that of "Uncle Wag."

I would like to mention a custom that prevailed in Tabernacle when I was a little girl. Uncle Wag Lewis, a very polite, kind old colored man was sexton. He cleaned the church, made fires and kept things in order. Just before the minister went into the pulpit to preach, Uncle Wag walked quietly up the aisle with a pitcher of water and placed it on a tray with two glasses. He put the glass tray on the pulpit. I think he considered it an honor to perform that service. The minister always took a drink of water at the close of his sermon.

—Memories of Mrs. Mattie Walston, age 90: September 9th, 1979.

Interestingly enough, this tray and one of the glasses were found by Mrs. Walston in a wood-box and kept by her for many years. Some members also remember that on occasion the tray and glass were used as a communion service. In fact, members refer to the set as a "communion service" when it is mentioned. In 1979, Raymond Wilson built a display case to be used to display these treasures. Norwood Dixon Twisdale, Sr. stained the case. It has a position of prominence in the fellowship hall of the church. It is still used as a communion service on special occasions such as Maundy Thursday.

Another interesting custom from days gone by is remembered by Mrs. Nannie Belle Coghill. This memory involves the reason the church has two doors.

So many of the churches in the old days had two doors. It makes you wonder why because you didn't need but one door but in those days the men would go in one door and the women would go in the other. At Tabernacle, the men went in at the left-hand door, and the women went in the right door.

There was also a reason for the way the pews are arranged in our church.

There was a strip right down the center of the long pews. The men would sit on one side of the strip and the women would sit on the other side. Sometimes, when young folks were courting or a husband and wife wanted to sit beside one another they would sit on either side of the strip as close as they could get. The men and women would go in the "right" door, but they would sit "together" despite the strip. After the war (World War I) they did away with that strip. That sounds funny to people now, that a man and his wife could not sit together, but that is the way all the churches were back then. Nutbush was the same way...They had two doors in the original church, but their men went in on the right hand side, ours went in on the left.

Mrs. Coghill also remembers the way the church was organized when she was a girl. The organ was up front (where it is now).

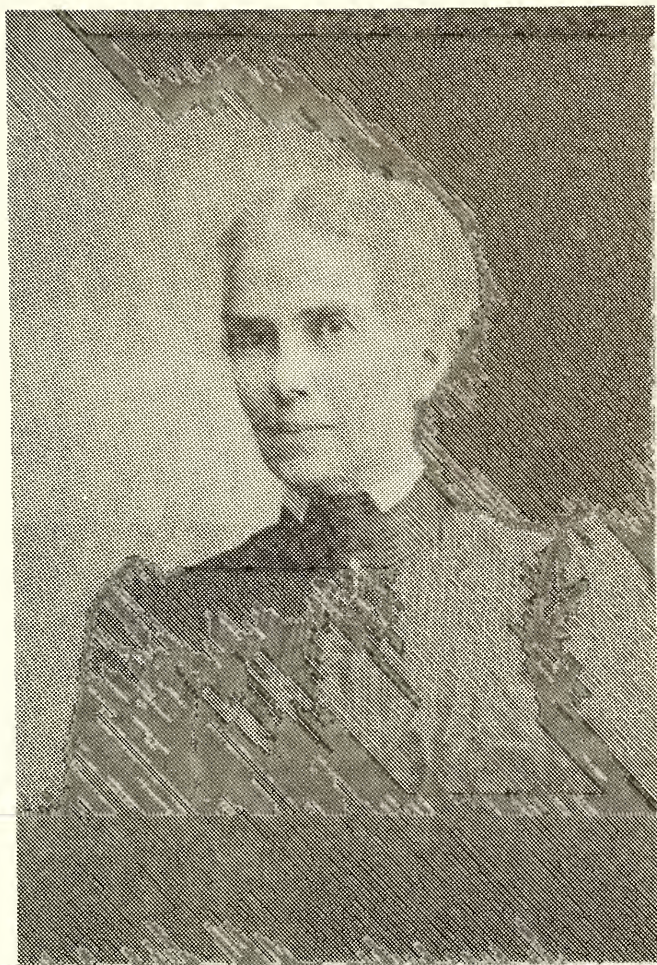
The men would get up near the organ — those who were going to help with the singing . . . We didn't have a choir . . . A wood stove stood right in the center of the building. Some of the long benches were in front of the stove and some were in back of the stove. It was comfortable . . .

Music has always been an important part of the life of Tabernacle Church. Usually, someone would play the piano or organ for Sunday School each Sunday. Whenever the minister came to Tabernacle to conduct services, the organ would be played if possible. Over the years, a number of persons have offered their talents in this way.

The first person we have a memory of playing the organ was Mrs. William H. (Lucy Cole) Burwell. Lucy Cole came to this community as a governess to the Burwell family while her brother, the Reverend John N. Cole, was pastor on the Ridgeway Circuit. Lucy married W. H. Burwell some time afterward, and remained in this community. The organ in our church sanctuary was given to the church in memory of Mrs. Burwell by her daughter Edith Burwell. A picture of Lucy Cole Burwell was given to the church in the 1940's by Mrs. Burwell's daughters, Lucy and Edith, at the request of Mattie Walston.

Lucy Cole Burwell is thought to have been the person who organized the first missionary society for women at Tabernacle. Her dedication to the missionary efforts of Methodism was remembered by her family in a gift of money to the Methodist Orphanage (currently called Methodist Children's Home) in Raleigh. A cottage on the campus of the Children's Home is named for Mrs. Burwell.

Mrs. Burwell's daughters, Edith and Lucy, played the organ in worship services during the early years of this century. Jennie Twisdale Vaughan played the piano during Sunday School and sometimes substituted during worship services. Mrs. Mattie Walston is also remembered as having played the piano from time to time during the 1920s. Later Selma and Louise Norwood played the piano for Sunday School. Many members who grew up during the 1940s and 1950s remember seeing Fannie Chappin Harris Riggan at the piano during those years playing for worship services on a regular basis. From time to time, Mrs. Riggan was assisted by Dorothy Taylor, Twisdale Richardson and Fitzalan Sparrow Norwood, both of whom played for Sunday School during this time period. After Mrs. Riggan's death, Anne Brewer Howell began serving as pianist during worship services. Sherrie Sparrow also played the piano for worship for a time as well as playing for the Sunday School. In later years, Anne Howell has been assisted by Alma Matthews and Melanie Howell, who currently plays for our Sunday School on a regular basis. Others who have served as pianists from time to time over the years include Sheila Norwood and Ailene Brewer Green.



**Lucy Cole Burwell**

**Founder of first missionary society for women at Tabernacle M. E. Church,  
South. Sister of Reverend John N. Cole. Wife of William Henry Burwell.**



Several stories have been remembered and told through the years by members about persons who were involved with the different building projects of the church. Oliver Brewer remembers that his father, John H. Brewer, told him that when he was a "lad-boy," he had hauled wood shavings away from the building site of the new church for days on a one-horse wagon. This would have been in 1888, when Brewer was about sixteen years old. Members who were doing work on the church through the Spring and Summer months, had constructed a brick-kiln at the building site where the lumber was dried for use in constructing the frame building. We think the trees were hauled to the building site and planks cut out of the logs for use in the building. The shavings that John H. Brewer hauled away from the site would have come from the hand planes used to shape the wood for use.

Tradition has it that the pews which are still in use in our sanctuary were made here as well, while the church was being built. They are hand-crafted pews. If examined closely, one can detect the lines made by the hand-plane used to smooth the lumber for use. As the pulpit and other furnishings of the sanctuary show, much care and skill was used in crafting the furniture of our church. One of the features of our sanctuary which often provokes comment by visitors is the five-pointed star which is part of the wood trim in the arch above the pulpit. The round, multi-colored window above the porch of the sanctuary also provokes comment. The origin and purpose of both remains a mystery to our congregation. Perhaps someone simply thought they would be nice decorations.

The round window originally was placed in the front of the sanctuary built in 1888. When a porch was added in 1957, the window was carefully removed and put in to the facade of the porch. Coleman Twisdale served as the contractor for this building effort as he had also done in 1953 when the four classrooms and two bathrooms were added at the back of the church. Mrs. Bessie King donated four trees from her farm to be used for the pillars of the porch when it was constructed. John Yancey, Bessie's brother, is said to have had the idea of building the porch. Earlier, John Yancey and Coleman Twisdale conceived the plan for building the Sunday school classrooms. Through the efforts of folks like John and Bessie our church has continued to be improved.

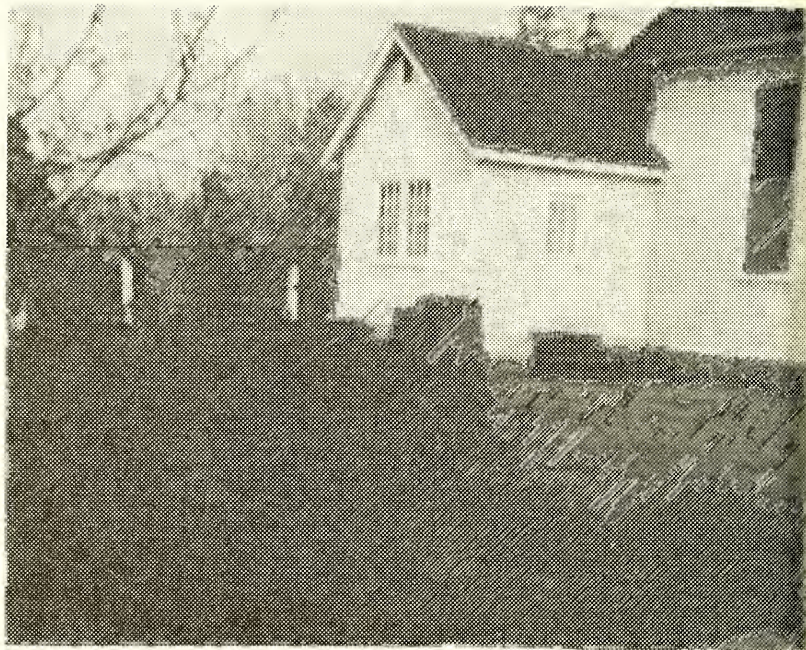
More recently, Jack Brewer is remembered for the leadership he gave when Tabernacle Church began considering the possibility of building a fellowship hall and classrooms adjacent to the church. When several concerns were expressed about the possibility, Jack is remembered to have said, "Well, if you don't go forward, you will go backward. You can't just sit still." Brewer is said to have reminded the congregation of a nearby church cemetery, the only surviving sign of a once thriving church in our community. Because of the "seed" which Jack sowed, our church now has a very fine fellowship hall as well as three classrooms and the pastor's study in the building next to the sanctuary. On the fireplace hearthwall, a plaque has





**Tabernacle Methodist Church, ca. 1953**





**"A tree is felled, a new seed is sown"**  
**February 12, 1977**



**Fellowship Building near completion in September 1977**

been placed by the church. The plaque reads:

This building is dedicated to all our members and friends who sacrificed toward the construction cost of 40,000 dollars and to Jack Brewer who sowed the initial seed.

The Reverend Henry Lovelace remembers sitting with Jack under the old oak tree that once stood beside the sanctuary as Jack took a stick and sketched out in the dirt with a stick his idea of what the building should be like.

Members also remember the grief that was felt when the old oak tree, which was so well beloved by our membership, had to be cut down. There was a measure of opposition to the idea of cutting down such a fine old tree, but when the tree was cut down the core of the old oak was discovered to be rotten. As it turned out, the idea of the fellowship hall was an idea whose time had come in many, many ways.

Through the years, many persons have contributed their prayer, presence, gifts, and service to Tabernacle Church as part of the work of our congregation in the mission of Methodism. Time and space only permit two such examples:

Some of our members may have never met Mrs. George N. Allen. She grew up in our community and remembered attending Sunday School in a buggy as a girl. As a young woman, Mary Burwell married George N. Allen. The couple later lived in Warrenton. Mr. Allen was an executive in the American Tobacco Company. Beginning in 1953, and lasting for more than twenty years, Mr. and Mrs. Allen made gifts to our church each year. The church also received two bequests from the estate of Mr. Allen and later his wife. The total amount of the gifts given by this family to our church was just under \$19,000.00.

There have been others, such as Henry B. Taylor and George Richardson who have consistently remembered our church with gifts over the years. But if everyone is not wealthy enough to give large sums of money, everyone is able to offer whatever gifts they may have to God's service.

Mary Jack Matthews was a member of our church for many years. Mary Jack, though small in stature, was nevertheless a character who stands large in our congregation's memory. Mary Jack had not had many advantages in her life, having had limited opportunities for education and having known the hard times of the depression years. Mary Jack was an individual who followed her own way, not being too concerned about whether other folks approved of "her way" or not. She lived next to the church in a little white house. Never having had any children herself, she was very much interested in all children in our church and community.

Part of Mary Jack's "way" of serving was to go around to friends she had in this community and in other communities asking them to give money to this or that project of Tabernacle Church. She is believed to have raised a great deal of money simply by asking her friends to give to "her church."

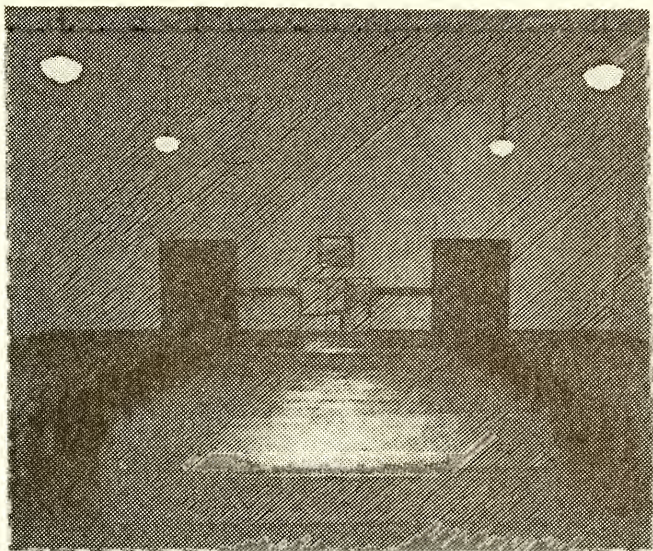


Whether gifts to our church have come unannounced through the mail or through the sincere requests of our members, through the years a great many people have helped support the ministries of Tabernacle Church through "church collections," offerings, and memorials. We remember all of these gifts to God and give thanks for the ministries which they have enabled and the blessing which they have been to us.

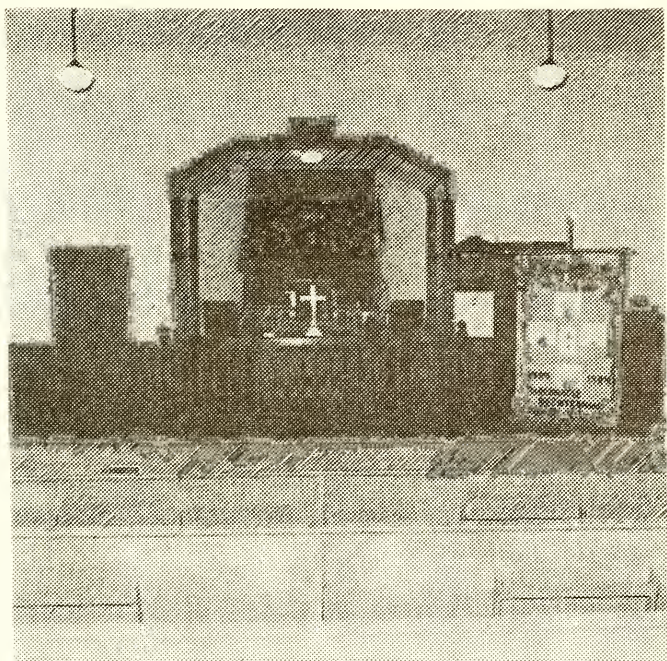
Over the years, many things have changed at "the Tabernacle." Ministers have come and gone. Members have given themselves in service, and long since died, joining our Lord in the glory of the Resurrection. Even our memories have changed a bit. Many members remember seeing Mr. Richard Matthews driving up to the church in his buggy pulled by a horse as he had done all his life. When many folks were beginning to drive automobiles, Mr. Richard Matthews represented the passing of an era within the living memory of our church. Other members can still remember "the old church," before the additions of the porch, classrooms, and fellowship building over the past quarter of a century. But now that these additions have been made, our mental picture of "the Tabernacle" has also changed.

Tabernacle is no longer a "brush arbor" on the American frontier. Tabernacle has become a church. Similarly, no longer is Tabernacle on a circuit along with seventeen churches — or eight or five other churches. Our situation has changed. We are now a "station charge" with new responsibilities and new opportunities. The brush arbor has given way to a sanctuary and a fellowship building. The Roanoke Circuit has given way to the opportunity to become self-supporting as a church congregation with the challenges of a full-time ministry. Before us lies the future. New changes and new challenges await us. Having survived and thrived now for two hundred years we march into our third century confident that the same God who has led us in ages past will be "our hope for years to come." Our God will be "a shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home."<sup>3</sup> May our memories be the source of our hope, and may our hope be worthy of the vocation to which God has called us as the congregation of God's people at "the Tabernacle."



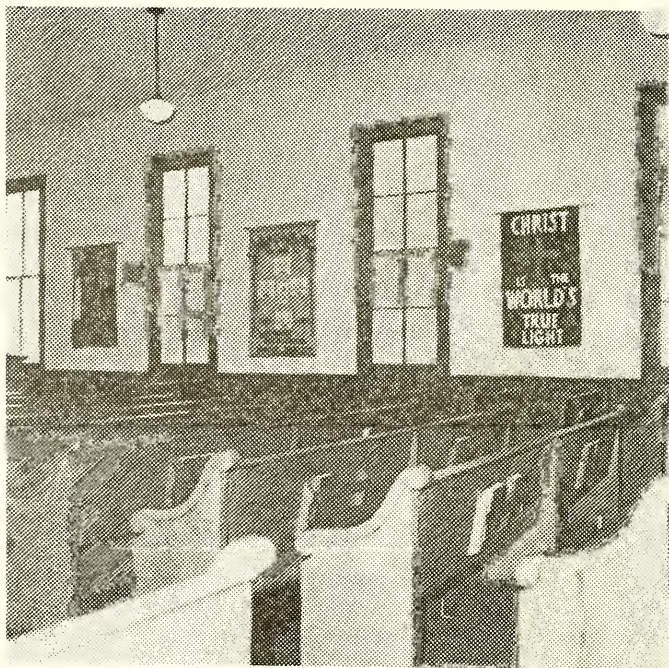


**Tabernacle Sanctuary**



**Chancel of Tabernacle Church**





Right side of Tabernacle Sanctuary

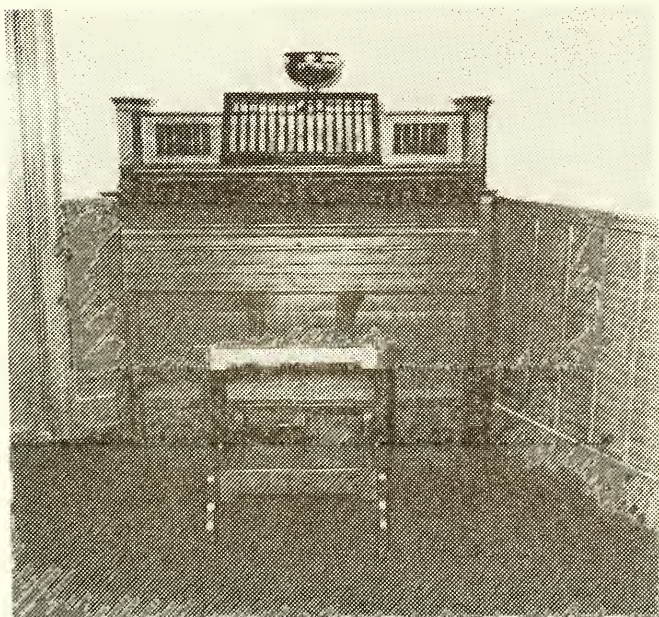


Left side of Tabernacle Sanctuary



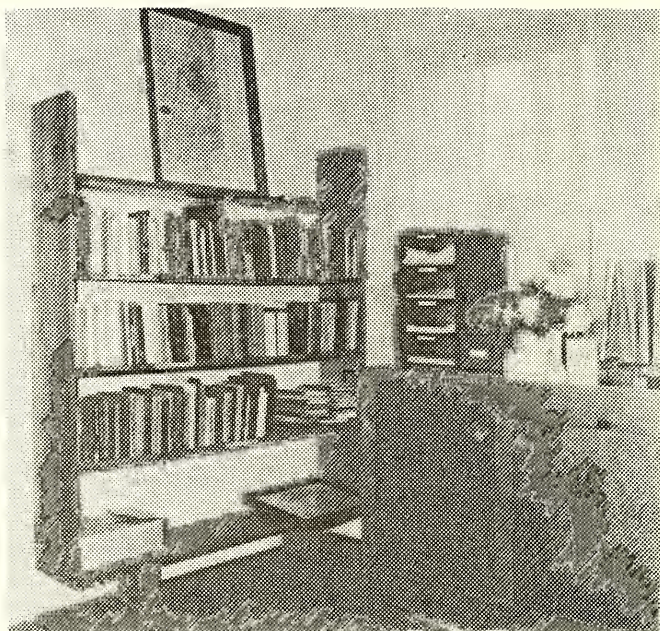


**Church Nursery**

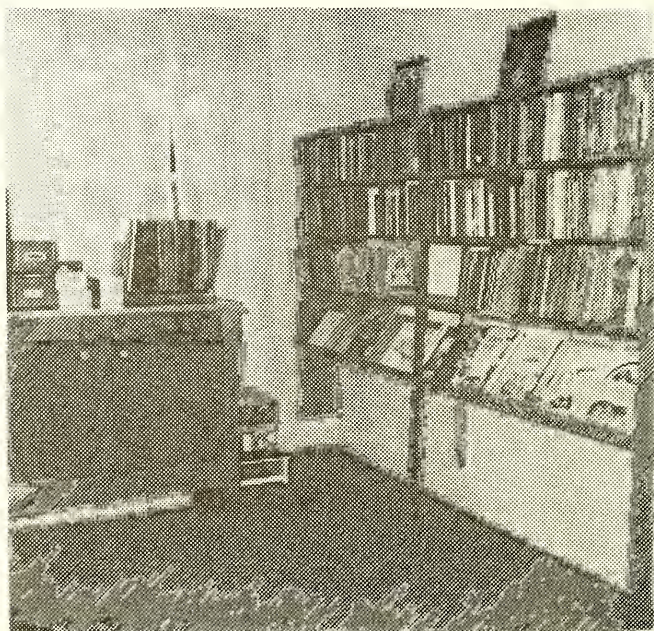


**Organ given by Mrs. Edith Burwell  
Right front corner of Sanctuary**

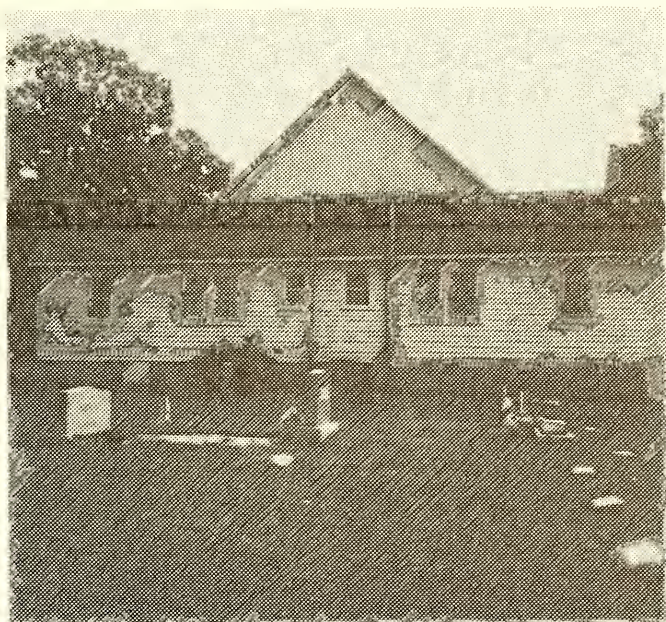




**The Mattie Walston Memorial Library**







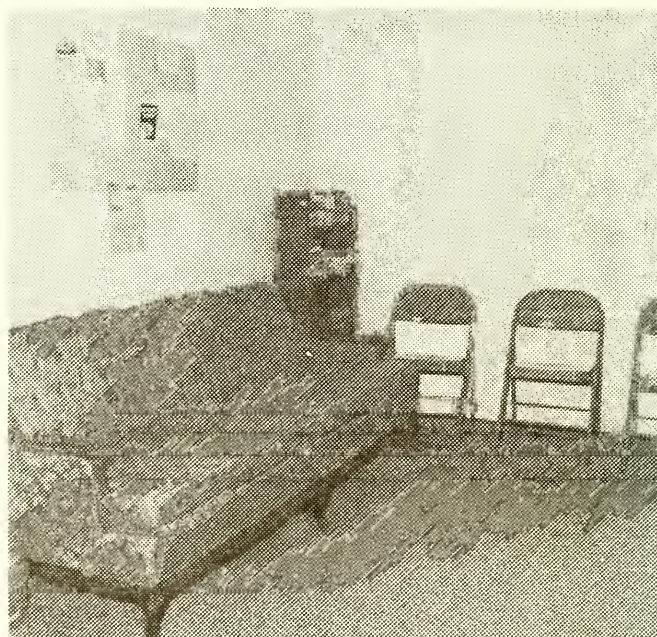
**Back and side of classrooms built in 1953**



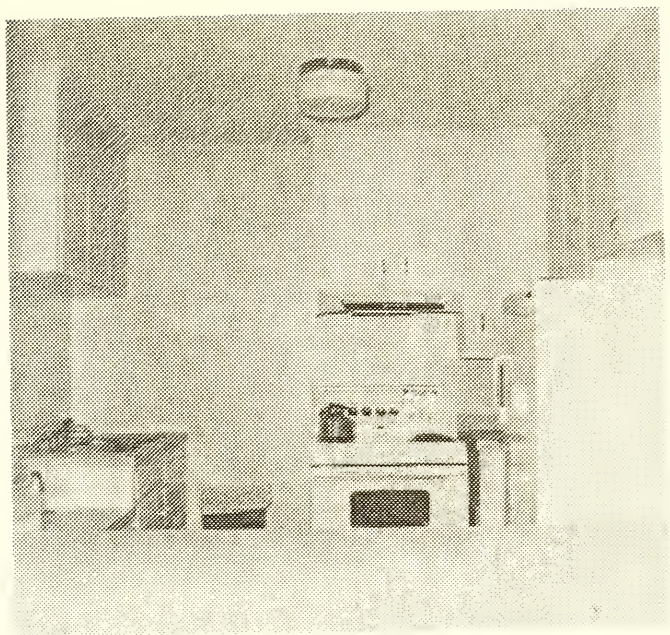




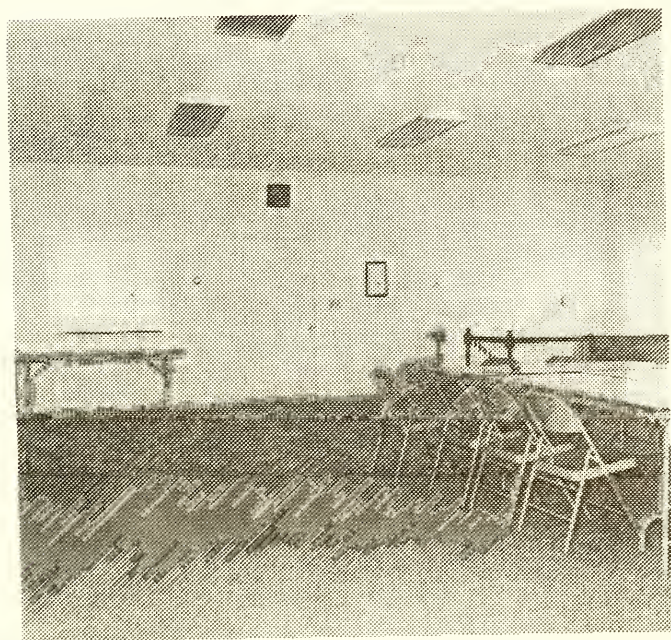
**Youth Class and Choir Room**



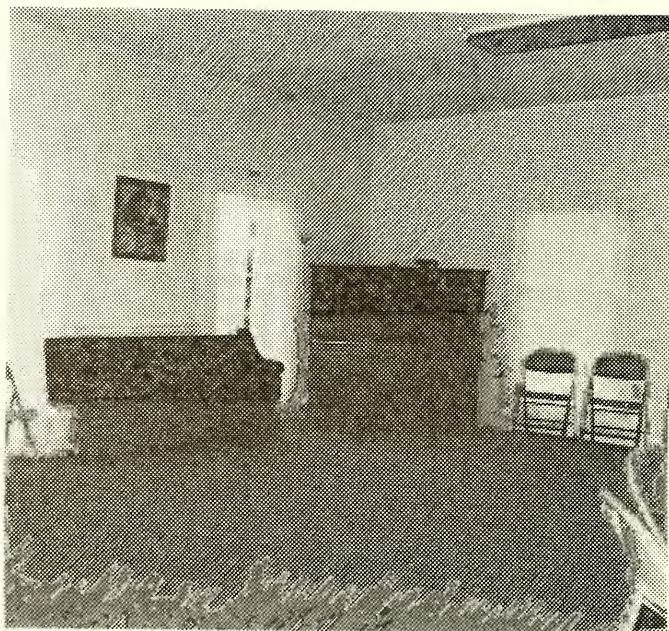




**Church Kitchen and Fellowship Hall**







**Corner with Piano in Fellowship Hall**

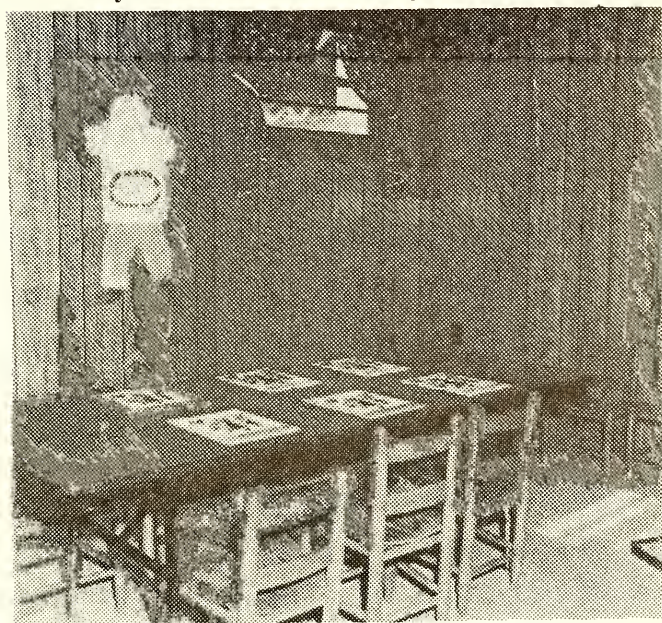


**Fireplace and Display Cases in Fellowship Hall**



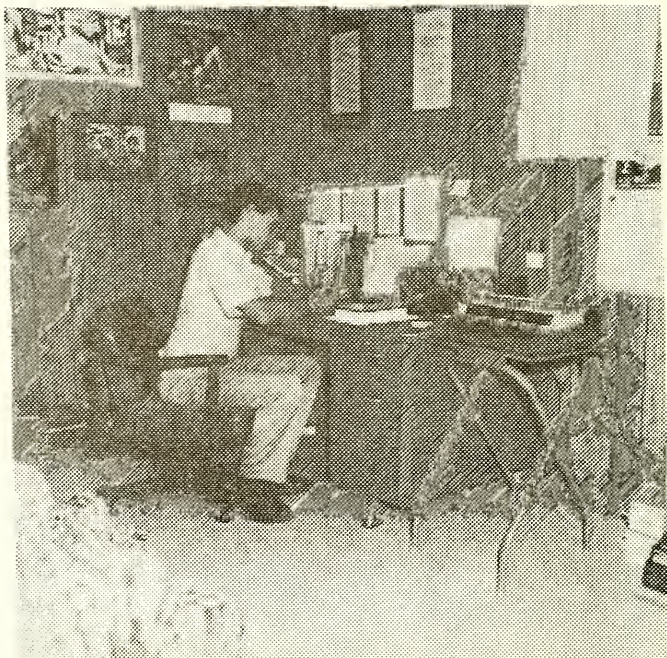


**Sylvia Anderson's Elementary A Classroom**



**Sandy Tillotson's Kindergarten Classroom**

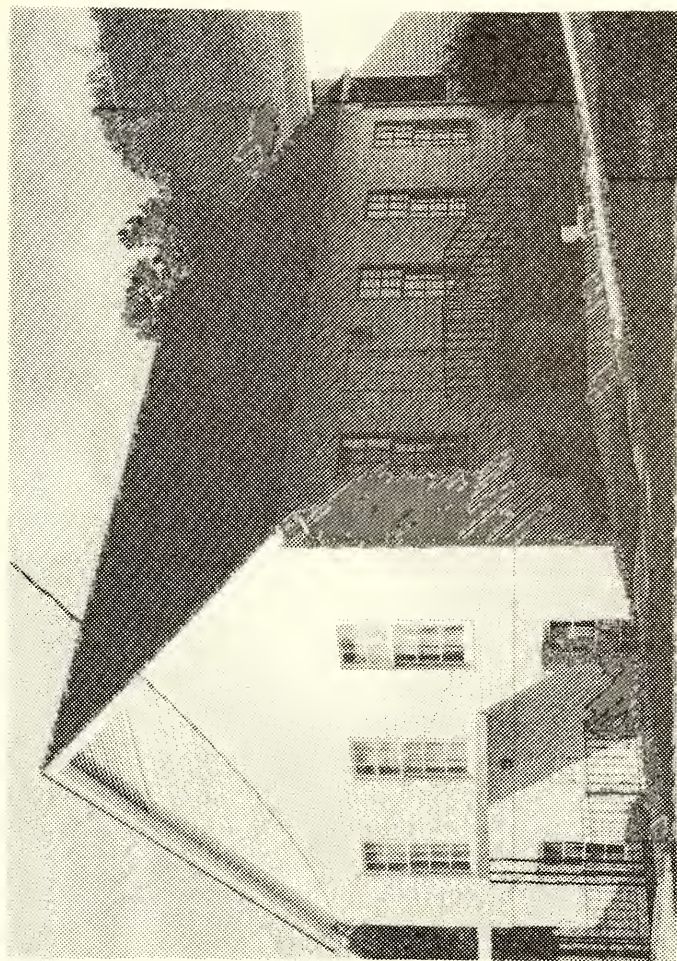




**Pastor's Study/Church Office**



**Geraldine Brewer's Elementary B Classroom**



**Fellowship Building with New Awning, 1984**



**APPENDIX ONE**  
**MEMBERSHIP OF TABERNACLE METHODIST**  
**ESPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH'**

1896

James L. Ridout	Sarah Chavis (colored)
Mary G. Burwell	Alice Tarry (colored)
Sallie V. Boyd	Florence Moore
Mary S. Norwood	George Burwell
Mary A. Tucker	Louiza Stegall
Lucy Hester	William M. Taylor
Eliza F. Newton	James A. Ridout
Emily Short	Henry W. Burwell
Clara Hester	Melancthon B. Harris
Martha Riggan	Thomas J. Stegall
Lovely A. Watson	John C. Burwell
Martha S. Peryear	John H. Hester
Sallie J. Ridout	Lora H. Riggan
Mary A. Beaver	Alice G. Taylor
Margaret Watson	Mary E. Ridout
Sarah S. Lewis	Richard B. Williams
Louisa A. Matthews	Ellen G. Williams
Roxana Smiley	John J. Taylor
Lucretia E. Richardson	Edward B. Brewer
Prudence A. Newton	Sallie W. Brewer
William H. Burwell	Mary A. Wooton
Mary J. Harris	Mary Taz Tally
William L. Boyd	Indiana Harris
Mary O. Burwell	Mary E. Rose
Sarah F. Williams	Lashley Estes
Lucy A. Burwell	Samuel H. Johnson
John J. Riggan	Theophilus P. Rose
John Norwood	W. Daniel Yancey
Josephine Matthews	Rose Yancey
James A. Boyd	William A. Lynch
A. T. Smiley	Caroline Lynch
Willie Newton	Robert Keaton
Dinkie Faulkner	Lillie Murphy
Martha J. Shanks	Sally Smiley
John E. Rose	Pelham Eastwood
Rebecca Rose	Geneva Rose
William J. Smiley	Annie E. Ridout Hester
M. F. Williams	Lucy Burwell
Rebecca Norwood	Sallie B. Jones
Richard G. Tucker	Lucy A. Overby
H. W. Beaver	Mary E. Vandyke
Salina Moore	Mary E. Taylor
Minnie Tucker	Sallie S. Tackett
Richard G. Tucker, Jr.	David Williams

John Marvin Harris  
 William Alvin Harris  
 Edward C. Norwood  
 Addie S. Moore  
 Annie S. Burwell  
 Mary Emma Moore  
 Nannie E. Bowen Wilson  
 Isaac J. Short  
 George W. Hester  
 Willie Coleman  
 William T. Brewer  
 Tabbie Twisdale  
 Annie J. Neathery  
 Richard A. Davis  
 Mary R. Williams  
 Amelia Johnson  
 Mary Tally  
 Eliza Stegall Newton  
 W. S. Richardson  
 W. J. Bowen  
 Ella L. Bowen  
 Mary W. Burwell  
 Thomas W. Taylor  
 Lizzie Burwell  
 Edward L. Brewer  
 Obadiah O. Wilson  
 Asa Moore  
 John H. Brewer  
 George W. Brewer  
 Taylor W. Ridout  
 Martha A. Norwood  
 Marian Taylor

Robert L. Vandyke  
 Isaac J. Tackett  
 Jane Robinson  
 Mollie A. Matthews  
 Mattie Rose  
 Mollie Gooch Harris  
 Ruth V. Brewer  
 Jennie Ridout  
 Jennie W. Yancey  
 Lillie V. Burwell  
 Mary S. Bowen  
 Kate W. Harris  
 John H. Wimbush  
 Jacob Riggan Norwood  
 John W. Robinson  
 Thomas A. Williamson  
 Emmitt M. Newman  
 Martha L. Newman  
 Ella F. Moore  
 William H. Lambert  
 India L. Twisdale  
 Mary E. Reese  
 James E. White  
 Goodridge Boyd Brewer  
 Thomas Palmer Ridout  
 Willie Anne Bowen  
 Pattie Clark Burwell  
 Bessie Green Short  
 Grace Thomas Moore  
 Nellie Gooch  
 Samuel Moore  
 Jacob Herbert Riggan

# MEMBERSHIP OF TABERNACLE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

1926

Mrs. David Williams  
 Mrs. Sarah Capps  
 A. M. Massenburg  
 Hammett Brewer  
 Jacob Norwood, Sr.  
 Lou Van Dyke  
 Pett Norwood  
 Boley Norwood  
 Louis Norwood  
 Willie Proctor  
 James C. Tilghman  
 Georgia B. Tilghman  
 Cephas Twisdale  
 Myrtle N. Twisdale

D. W. Van Dyke  
 Houston Johnson  
 Jake Riggan  
 James Riggan  
 Mrs. James Riggan  
 George Washington Matthews  
 Mrs. George Washington Matthews  
 Jack Matthews  
 Mrs. Jack Matthews  
 Roy L. Hope  
 Mrs. Roy L. Hope  
 Willie T. Brewer  
 Ed Short  
 Mrs. Ed Short

Mrs. A. B. Ellis  
 Willie H. Henderson  
 Monroe Epps  
 George A. Richardson  
 Mrs. Ed Norwood  
 Ed Norwood  
 Lee Wilson  
 Ruth V. Brewer  
 Mrs. Lisa Newton  
 W. S. Richardson  
 John H. Brewer  
 Mrs. J. H. Brewer  
 Mrs. Buck Stark  
 Miss Rebecca Norwood  
 George L. Burwell  
 Mrs. George L. Burwell  
 Mrs. Jake Norwood  
 Tom Stegall  
 J. A. Norwood  
 J. A. Boyd  
 Mrs. Henrietta S. Brewer  
 Louise Stegall  
 Kenneth Tillotson  
 Ola B. Short  
 Mrs. Viene Woody  
 John W. (Buck) Short  
 C. Wesley Guerrant  
 Ora Mae Strumm  
 Billie Matthews  
 Mrs. Joe Richardson  
 Malvin Norwood  
 Charlie Norwood  
 John Yancey Norwood  
 Edward Norwood  
 Macon Norwood

Martha Norwood  
 Boyd Henderson  
 Stearl McGimsey  
 Willie E. Norwood  
 Richard E. Norwood  
 George C. Norwood  
 Selma R. Norwood  
 Louise Norwood  
 Mrs. Virginia Harris  
 Byron M. Brewer  
 William Riggan  
 Virginia Riggan  
 Jennie L. Twisdale  
 Mrs. Thomas Matthews  
 Mr. Thomas Matthews  
 Lizzie Brewer  
 Mary Jack Bottoms  
 Jack Bottoms  
 Thornton Brewer  
 Eugene Brewer  
 Billy Burwell  
 William Reese  
 George Wilson  
 George Newton  
 Mrs. George Newton  
 Mat Norwood  
 Alton Grissom  
 Henry M. Burwell  
 Mrs. Marion Taylor  
 Nat Boyd  
 Richard Matthews  
 Mrs. John Yancey  
 Claude Henderson  
 Eddie Henderson  
 George Henderson

# MEMBERSHIP OF TABERNACLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1984

Myrtle Norwood Twisdale  
 Byron M. Brewer  
 Virginia Riggan Matthews  
 Jennie Twisdale Vaughan  
 Elizabeth Brewer Wilson  
 Malvin Norwood  
 Charlie Thomas Norwood, Sr.  
 John Yancey Norwood  
 Edward Norwood  
 Holden Norwood  
 Eliza Lee Matthews

Frankie Riggan Walker  
 John Matthews  
 Mrs. Sam Williamson  
 Bryant Hope  
 Ray Norwood  
 Julia Norwood  
 Stanley Norwood, Sr.  
 Gallie Norwood Twisdale  
 Virginia Harris  
 Virginia Brewer Watkins  
 Annie Mae Twisdale Abbott



Richard Matthews	Peggie Norwood
Frank King	Rita Holt Brewer Clark
Effie Brewer	J. Ronald Hancock
Doris Coghill Matthews	Betty Ann Norwood Hancock
Virginia Coghill Richardson	Ronald J. Anderson
Nannie Belle Coghill	Charlie William Walker, Sr.
John William Brewer	Bettye Twisdale
Jennie Proctor Kimball	Debra Renee Twisdale
Annie F. Richardson	Pete Richardson, Jr.
Martha Francis Brewer Steck	Twyla Smith Stegall
Margaret E. Proctor Whitey	Charles Meades Sparrow
Elizabeth Proctor Tillory	Dorothy Ann "Dottie" Sparrow
Macon N. Twisdale	Ronald Wayne Sparrow
Gladys Jones Norwood	Jean Harris Sparrow
Oliver E. Brewer	Alice Wilson
Tat Van Dyke	William A. Wright
Doris J. Twisdale Richardson	Nancy Jo Twisdale O'Geary
Geraldine Sparrow Brewer	Phyllis Rapier McCord
James C. Tilghman	Sandra Abbott Ellington
Georgia Tilghman	Sherron Twyla Sparrow
Zack L. Van Dyke	Roland De Potie
Julia Brewer	Dorothy De Potie
William M. Tilghman	Nita Jane Twisdale
Shirley Marie Van Dyke Jones	Howard H. McCord
James E. Twisdale	Lee Twisdale
Mildred Strum	Karen Twisdale
Frank H. Matthews	Thomas Howell
Mary Frazier Short	Kenneth Clark
Lewis Thurman Watkins	Eloise Harris Richardson
Charlie William Walker, Jr.	Perry Linwood Twisdale
Betty Walker Hester	Sarah Norwood
Clifton Jacob Walker	Jimmy Norwood
Joan B. Richardson Moody	Beverly Jaynes Walker
Elizabeth Raven Wilson Norwood	Mike Franklin
David Robert Norwood	Odell W. Pulley
Louise Fleming Norwood	Norwood Dixon Twisdale, Jr.
Sylvia A. Fleming Norwood	Deborah Knuckles Twisdale
Jasper Eugene Strum	Ray Sherfey
Mrs. Stanley C. Norwood	Frances Sherfey
Boyd P. "Pete" Richardson, Sr.	Sandra Tillotson
Nacny Van Dyke Parker	Eleanor Frantz
Irma Van Dyke Hester	Arthur Robert "Dickie" Norwood
Stanley Carl Norwood, Jr.	Isabel Jackmon "Jackie" Norwood
Charles Moody	Mary Catherine Nowell
Jeanette Capps Twisdale	Catherine Rush Twisdale
Selma Norwood	Lezah Victoria Sparrow
Norwood Dixon Twisdale, Sr.	Mitch Norwood
Julia Anne Brewer Howell	Kim Norwood
John Edward Walker	Susan Lynn Hester
Fred Howard Richardson	Jeaneen Marion Twisdale

Robert Smiley  
Anna Hicks Walker  
Betty Rose Norwood

Melanie Howell  
Jessica Casto

### **PREPARATORY MEMBERSHIP ROLL**

Allison Nicole Clark  
Anthony Lex Twisdale  
John Elvin Clark  
Twyla Miranda Franklin  
Heather Mae Twisdale  
Emily Dawn Richardson  
Brienne Alice Tillotson  
Breidi Lynn Tillotson  
Tammy Lee Tillotson  
Derrick Ryan Blackmon  
Anna Elizabeth Walker  
Catherine Danielle Nowell  
Kelly DeLora Twisdale  
Jacob Matthew Twisdale  
Craig Alan Smiley  
Joshua Harlan Sherfey  
Sarah Teresa Sherfey  
Elizabeth Anne Sherfey  
Thomas Hester

## APPENDIX TWO

### MINISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED TABERNACLE

The following biographical summaries of ministers who have served Tabernacle Church are provided as the record of those servants of the Gospel who helped Tabernacle Church to become what it is today.'

Some explanation of terms found in these accounts is in order:

To be received "on trial" in the Annual Conference means that someone is accepted into the membership of that body for a trial period. In later years, this status has also been referred to as "probationary membership."

Closely related to being a member on trial is the status of ordination as a deacon. As in the Episcopal Church, this ordination is a permanent order of service but it is also a transitional status. The final ministerial order in Methodism is that of elder. Both of these terms derive from the New Testament words for those set apart by the early Church to be ministers. Elders are ordained to ministries of "word, sacrament, and order" in the church.

When one is admitted in "full connection" in an Annual Conference, this refers to the fact that the Annual Conference is the fellowship in which a minister's membership resides. Methodist ministers are members, then, not of local churches but of Annual Conferences.

Other relationships with an Annual Conference include the "retired relation" which marks the fact that a member of the conference is no longer serving as an active minister. Those who are thus retired from active service, either on a temporary or permanent basis are referred to as "superannuated" or "superannuary" members.

Occasionally, two or more ministers were assigned to the same circuit. When this occurred, one minister might be referred to as the "junior preacher" for the circuit, indicating that he was assisting another minister who had senior responsibility for the circuit's ministry.



#### ROANOKE CIRCUIT: 1779-1784

**FRANCIS ASBURY (1745-1816)** did not actually serve Tabernacle as pastor, but he served American Methodism as its "first bishop." In the *Journal* of Francis Asbury we learn that he was born in England, about four miles from Birmingham, in Staffordshire. Asbury did not have much opportunity for schooling since he was hired out as an apprentice at the age of thirteen. It was while he was working at the forge near his home that the young Asbury heard about Methodism through a man named Foxall who was his superior at the forge. Later, at the age of eighteen, Asbury was converted and preached his first sermon. The next year, in 1766, Asbury took the place of a travelling preacher who was ill for nine months. Then, in 1767, Asbury was admitted "on trial" into the Conference of the growing movement of Methodism led by John Wesley.

In 1771, Mr. Wesley needed volunteers to go to America to serve the growing number of societies that were started in the late 1760s. Francis Asbury volunteered and was chosen to go to America. Asbury arrived in Philadelphia on October 27, 1771. While aboard ship, Asbury started his *Journal*, a practice he would continue until near the time of his death in 1816. It is from Asbury's *Journal* that we learn about his visit in our area and the occasion on June 25th, 1780 when he preached at "the Tabernacle" to "four hundred people, rich and poor."

Asbury played a crucial role in the formation of Methodism in America. At the Christmas Conference held at Lovely Lane Meeting House in Baltimore, Maryland, Asbury was "elected" to serve as Superintendent of the preachers in America. On December 27th, 1784, Asbury was consecrated superintendent by Thomas Coke with the assistance of a German pastor, Phillip William Otterbein, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey. The title of "bishop" was not approved until 1787.



Asbury was a man of great leadership ability. He was also a strongly authoritarian leader. Convinced as he was that the mission of Methodism required a strongly centralized authority, Asbury soon found himself in conflict with the American preachers who had been born in the "new world" and were more in favor of democratic procedures. Interestingly enough, Asbury's trip through Virginia and North Carolina in the early summer of 1780 was for the purpose of making peace with the southern preachers who had threatened to ordain themselves at the Conference of 1779 held at Fluvanna, Virginia. Preaching at such places as "the Tabernacle," Asbury discovered the hospitality of folks like Colonel Edmund Taylor and his extended family. No wonder that Asbury found he had to revise his preconceptions about the kind of folks who lived in the Carolinas!

Until his death in 1816, Asbury had a dominant (and occasionally domineering!) influence on the development of Methodism in this country. When Asbury came to America in 1771, there were no more than 1000 "Methodists in society" in the new country. When he died in 1816, there were far more than 100,000 Methodists all across the country! Asbury himself travelled more than 247,000 miles on the many circuits of little Methodist "societies" that sprang up across the country through the work of the circuit riders and laypeople who provided the local leadership to keep the societies going strong. The shadow of Francis Asbury remains large as we look back over these two hundred years of ministry by circuit riders and laymen and women alike!

JESSE LEE (1758-1816) may have preached at Tabernacle in 1779 when he took the place of John Dickins on the Roanoke Circuit while Dickens attended to some literary matters. Born in Prince George County, Virginia (sixteen miles from Petersburg) Jesse Lee was converted under the ministry of Robert Williams in 1774. (For details of Lee's decision to become a minister, see Chapter One, "During the Revolution.") Jesse Lee is considered to be the "father of Methodism in New England" and next to Asbury in influence in early American Methodism. He is one of the few preachers of the period who was not present for the Christmas Conference at Lovely Lane Chapel in Baltimore in 1784. Lee always regretted this and attributed it to the fact that Freeborn Garrettson, the courier sent to summon the preachers, had preached too much along the way.

Lee accompanied Asbury on one of his tours through the South, and the two appear to have been close friends. Lee was elected to deacon's orders in 1786 but declined ordination. Later, in 1790, he was privately ordained by Asbury and publicly ordained elder the following day at the Conference of 1790 in New York. Lee had hopes of being elected bishop at the Conference of 1790, but Richard Whatcoat was elected instead of Lee. This event brought discord to the relationship between Lee and Asbury. From 1790 to 1800, Lee served in New England, becoming the virtual founder of Methodism in that part of the country. In 1801, he returned to the South as a Presiding Elder in Virginia. In 1809, he was elected chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. He would be re-elected four times. In 1814 he was elected Chaplain of the Senate. In 1810, Jesse Lee published *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America*. This was the first history of Methodism in America ever written.

Jesse Lee also kept a voluminous *Journal*, which was unfortunately destroyed when the Publishing House in New York was burned in 1836. Jesse Lee died in 1816 while attending a camp meeting in Hillsborough, Maryland. He was buried in Baltimore and later moved along with other graves to the Mount Olive Cemetery, where his body rests near that of Francis Asbury.

JAMES O'KELLY, is listed among the ministers who conducted the "quarterly meeting" held at the Tabernacle in August, 1783. At the time, O'Kelly was appointed to the Brunswick (Virginia) Circuit. Given the fact that the ministers on adjacent circuits were occasionally directed to switch with one another at mid-year, it may be that O'Kelly was a familiar face to the little society at "the Tabernacle" during the 1780's. O'Kelly was from Irish stock, having been born in the colony of Virginia. Given the revolutionary spirit of the times, O'Kelly was opposed to all things that were "English" in appearance. Having begun preaching in 1778, O'Kelly was firmly opposed to what he perceived to be Francis Asbury's aristocratic tendencies. After the Christmas Conference of 1784, O'Kelly and Asbury began to progressively disagree about the way the young movement should be governed.

In 1789, O'Kelly challenged Asbury's right to "appoint" preachers to their stations. This issue came up at the first "general" Conference of the Methodist preachers in America in

1792. In bringing before the Conference a proposal that ministers could appeal to the Conference where they had grievances about their appointments, O'Kelly forced the issue to a decision. He lost and walked out of the Conference with a few other ministers. Later, he would start another Methodist group, "The Republican Methodist Church". This issue may have been more one of personality than substance since O'Kelly was himself a very authoritarian leader, despite his rhetoric about democratic principles. He and Asbury would continue to disagree publically with O'Kelly publishing several pamphlets on the topic of what he called "ecclesiastical monarchy". O'Kelly's movement later joined with the followers of another movement to form The Christian Church in 1801. This group would later merge with the Congregationalist Church, which would merge, still later, with other groups to form the United Church of Christ.

**JOHN DICKINS (1747-1798)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the many churches on the Roanoke Circuit during the years 1779 to 1782. Born in London, England, Dickins was educated at Eton College (quite a distinction at the time!). He came to America sometime before 1774, was converted in Virginia and became a travelling preacher in 1777. He first served the Carolina Circuit, then the Brunswick and Roanoke Circuits. At the end of 1780, he located, perhaps because he had lost his voice, and also because he had just married Elizabeth Yancey. He settled in Halifax County, N.C., and from time to time thereafter served as a circuit rider.

Dickins has the distinction of providing the answer to the question asked at the Christmas Conference of 1784 held at Lovely Lane Meeting House in Baltimore, Maryland, "What shall we call our connection?" Dickins is recorded as saying that the new organization of churches should be called the "Methodist Episcopal Church". Men like James O'Kelly would later take issue with the word "episcopal" when Asbury began to use the title of Bishop, but for better or worse, the name "Methodist Episcopal" was used in the names for the predecessor organizations of the United Methodist Church right up until 1939.

Dickins is also credited with beginning the "Methodist Book Concern" in 1789 with \$600.00 of his own savings. This was the first effort in America Methodism to provide educational materials for use in the church. From 1789 until his death, Dickins served as the "Book Agent" or "Book Steward" of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Education was one of his primary concerns. It was Dickins' idea to found the first Methodist school (Cokesbury College in Maryland). Dickins was also the first author in American Methodism, having prepared and published a *Short Scriptural Catechism*. The first periodical he published was the *Arminian Magazine*. Two volumes of this periodical were published in 1789-1790. Dickins managed to survive two scourges of yellow fever in Philadelphia, but he died in the third epidemic of the disease in 1798.

**JOHN EASTER** served Tabernacle Church as one of many churches on the Roanoke Circuit during the years 1783 to 1784. Easter was from Mecklenburg County, Virginia, and is credited with starting a church in that county which would be named for him, "Easter's Chapel". His brother, Thomas, was also an early Methodist circuit rider in the area of North Carolina and Virginia, and his son served as a local preacher for a time before becoming an Episcopal clergyman. Although very little is known about Easter, his preaching ability was widely recognized. Many accounts of his powerful exhortations have been written. In his *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, Grissom speculates that it may have been on the occasion of the Quarterly Meeting at Tabernacle in August of 1783 that one of Easter's contemporaries referred to the following incident. (see pp. 106-107)

"... after a fine but apparently ineffectual sermon by James O'Kelly, (Easter) opened an exhortation with the positive declaration that seven persons would be converted before the meeting ended. He had great faith in God and was not afraid to venture this assertion. The pious part of the congregation was much alarmed and thought his assertion bold and presumptuous. But he began to exhort, and the spirit of Elijah's God came upon him, and the people felt as though he had smitten them with the prophet's mantle; great power fell on the congregation, and before the meeting closed more than seven souls were powerfully converted."

It is no wonder that when Easter was appointed to the Brunswick Circuit in 1787, a great revival took place. It has been claimed that some 1800 people were added to the church in that time under his ministry. Among those converted and received into the church under

Easter's ministry were William McKendree and Enoch George, both of whom became bishops in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Records indicate that Easter located after 1795, but other references would seem to indicate that Easter continued to serve as a preacher in the area for many years, although not in an appointed capacity.

#### THE HENDERSON CIRCUIT: 1842 to 1885

**WILLIAM COMPTON**, (17??-1847), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from October 1842 to October 1843. This is the first year that the Henderson Circuit appears in the records of the North Carolina Conference. Compton was, therefore, the first pastor assigned to the circuit. Born in London, England, his parents moved with him to the United States in early life. Little is known of the circumstances of his upbringing. He was admitted on trial in the Virginia Conference in 1809. He was ordained elder in 1813. He would serve appointments in both the Virginia Conference and the (later to be formed) North Carolina Conference during his ministry over a twenty-nine year period interspersed with temporary "superannuation", because of illness. In 1846, he was appointed Presiding Elder over the New Berne District. He died of apoplexy in Oxford, N.C. in 1847.

At the time of his death, Compton's peers in the ministry noted that he was a "methodical man; he worked by rule. He seemed never to be hurried". Like John Wesley, he was said to be "a man of one book. He studied little but the Bible, and with that blessed volume he had a singular familiarity". He is remembered to have said that since he had begun keeping a count, he had read the Bible **thirty-nine** times. As a preacher he was remembered as being plain, clear, forcible and edifying.

**WILLIAM CLOSS** (1809-1882), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from October 1843 to October 1844. Born in Botetorte County, Virginia, Closs joined the Virginia Conference at Petersburg in 1833, being received on trial that year. He was ordained deacon in 1835 and received the ordination of elder in 1837. During his fifty years of ministry, Closs served numerous circuits in addition to serving as Presiding Elder for some twenty-eight years. Several times he was elected to serve as a delegate to the General Conference. He was widely known in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South for being a "silver-tongued orator" with a ready wit. His gifts for oratory were no doubt put to good use by the Conference. At his death, Bishop Pierce remarked, "He has not an equal in the Southern Church".

Closs was married twice but no record of his wives' names survives. His daughter, Fannie Closs was married to Rev. A.A. Boshamer who served Tabernacle some years later as pastor.

**ROBERT OSWALD BURTON** (1811-1891), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from December 1844 to December 1846. Burton also served Tabernacle at three other times. For full record see listing for 1877 to 1878.

**THOMAS SALE CAMPBELL** (1810-1888), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from December 1846 to November 1848. Born in Amherst County, Virginia, Campbell was raised by parents who were Methodists. His father was a class leader and the Campbell home was "the home of circuit riders" and a "preaching place in the winter." Campbell joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1826. In August of 1830, Campbell accompanied the junior preacher on his rounds and preached his first sermon on August 20, 1830. Later that fall, Campbell began to serve as a supply preacher when the junior preacher fell ill. In February of 1831, Campbell was admitted into the Virginia Conference on trial. He was ordained deacon in 1833 and received the ordination of elder in 1835. In 1844, Campbell was forced to retire for a time after a bout with malaria. He returned to service in 1846, the year he was appointed to the Henderson Circuit. From 1854 to 1856, Campbell served as President of Warrenton Female College. In 1856, Campbell located, but is recorded as having transferred back into the Conference in 1877 from the North Mississippi Conference. He retired in 1885 and died in 1888 at Lexington,



Virginia.

A possible connection with our church exists at another point. Anthony Sale, who was a class leader at Tabernacle in 1836 may have been Campbell's relative.

**PETER DOUB (1796-1869)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from December 1848 to November 1850. Doub was the child of German immigrants who settled in Stokes County, NC, where Doub was born. Doub's father had been converted to Christianity through the ministry of Phillip William Otterbein, (the founder of the United Brethern Church, which would later join with the Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church in 1968). As a child, Peter came to know Methodist ministers well because his parents offered their home to Methodist circuit riders as a preaching place. At the age of six while at a camp meeting on his father's land, Peter gave his life to God. Soon after his profession of faith at one of these services, Doub joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. Later he would feel called to preach.

On the recommendation of the Yadkin Circuit, Doub was admitted to the Virginia Conference in 1818. From his first appointment sprung a concern that Doub's sermons were far too short. The young minister took the advice of a friend and changed his method so that not only did his sermons become longer, they also became more eloquent. Doub later studied at Trinity College (now Duke University), receiving a Doctor of Divinity degree from that college. Later, Doub would serve as a professor of Biblical Literature at Trinity College. Described by one person as "never unemployed, never triflingly employed," the Reverend Dr. Doub was remembered at his death as a minister who "studied, travelled, prayed and preached incessantly."

During his years of service in the North Carolina Conference, Doub served numerous churches. He was elected to serve as a delegate to General Conference four times. At one of these conferences, an effort was made to elect Doub to the episcopacy, only to fail. Before his death in 1869, Doub served fifty-two years to the service of God in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

**EVAN E. FREEMAN (1820-1854)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from November 1850 to November 1851. Born in Granville County, NC, Freeman lived a short life. Not much is known about this early circuit rider except that he died of "rapid consumption" after a fairly short career in the ministry. He was admitted on trial into the North Carolina Conference in the 1840's. He was ordained deacon in 1845 and received the ordination of elder in 1847. He died in Pittsylvania County, Virginia in 1854. Freeman's death is a reminder of the rigorous life which the circuit riding ministry demanded of those who became Methodist ministers. Freeman may not have finished the year of his appointment. Other records indicate that T. B. Reeks served the Henderson Circuit during 1850-1851.

**THOMAS BRANCH REEKS (1825-1899)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from November 1850 (or 1851) to November 1852. Born in Granville County, NC, Reeks was converted in a prayer meeting. In 1844, Reeks joined the North Carolina Conference at Pittsboro, NC. At the early age of nineteen years he was appointed as the junior preacher on the Warren Circuit. Reeks would serve in the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church South until a problem with his throat caused him to retire for a few years. But in 1871, he would resume his service as an active minister in the Conference. Later he would again retire, permanently, from the active ministry.

Reeks is the first pastor of which our congregation has a local record as having served Tabernacle Church, although we know that he was not the first pastor to serve the church. At his death, Reeks was remembered by a fellow circuit rider preacher as being "plain, earnest, and scriptural, delighting to do his Master's work"... "Like Moses, he was slow in speech, modest and unassuming in disposition and yet bold in preaching the truth..."

Reeks was married to Anne E. Brame Reeks. He died at the home of his brother-in-law, John Brame, and was buried at the old Brame homestead near Macon, Warren County, North Carolina.

**PHILMER A. ARCHER** served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from November 1852 to November 1854. Very little is known about Archer. He is listed in the 1840 Minutes of the North Carolina Conference as having been "continued on trial." At the second session of Conference in 1840, Archer was admitted into full connection. He was ordained deacon in 1841 and was ordained elder in 1844. He served in the Conference from 1839 to 1857, after which there is no further reference to him available.

**JUNIUS P. MOORE (1815-1878)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit from November 1854 to November 1855. Later Moore would again be appointed to the Henderson Circuit from November 1876 to November 1877. Born in Person County, N.C., Moore was converted to Christianity and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1834 at the age of nineteen. Later he would become a local preacher and serve for some years in this capacity before joining the North Carolina Conference on trial in 1853. Among other appointments he served in the North Carolina Conference, Moore once served a period of time as the "presiding elder" of the Danville District. After a period of illness, Moore died in 1878.

At his death, Moore was remembered by his peers in the conference as having been a man of "high order, capable of forcible and impressive preaching, at times rising to 'heights of overwhelming intellectual and spiritual power.' " Many ministers remembered that at the annual love feasts during the session of Annual Conference, Moore would state that he intended to die at his post. The comment was made that when the time had come, Junius P. Moore had "not been caught unprepared." One of the members of Twitty's Chapel on the Henderson Circuit, W.W. White once remarked in his diary concerning the impressive and instructive sermon by Moore on the Holy Ghost.

**PETER H. JOYNER**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from November 1855 to November 1856. (One record indicates that Clarksville, Virginia was also on the Henderson Circuit during the year 1856.) Very little is known about Joyner. He was admitted on trial as a member of the North Carolina Conference in 1845. Because the bishop was not present for that session of annual conference, Joyner was not ordained deacon until 1846. In 1847 Joyner was ordained elder and admitted into full connection in the Conference. In 1858, Joyner was transferred to the Virginia Conference and he appears to have located the following year, in 1859.

**JOHN TILLET** (1812-1890), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from November 1856 to the time of the session of the North Carolina Conference in 1858. Born near Shiloh in Camden County, N.C., Tillett entered the North Carolina Conference on trial in 1839 at Salisbury. He was ordained deacon the following year and was received into full connection at that time. In 1842 Tillett was ordained elder. As with his predecessor, Tillett apparently was appointed to serve the "Henderson and Clarksville" Circuit. Tillett would have been fairly familiar with this area, since he had attended Randolph-Macon College at Boydton, Virginia, being a member of the first freshman class to enroll at that institution in 1833. Although he was studying to be a lawyer, he decided near the end of his studies to enter the ministry. He graduated in 1837.

After having taught school for a while near Mocksville, N.C., Tillett began his ministry. He was married to Elizabeth Wyche of Oxford, sister to Rev. Ira T. Wyche. The couple had nine children.

William Wallace White remarked in his diary concerning the good sermons preached by Rev. Tillett and the large congregations which Tillett attracted each time he preached in the area.

**BENJAMIN F. LONG** served Tabernacle as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from 1858 to 1860. Very little is known about Long's background apart from conference records of his service. Long was admitted on trial into the North Carolina Conference in 1854. He was ordained deacon in 1856, and admitted to full connection that same year. In 1858, Long was ordained elder. He located in 1865 after which we have no record of his activities or life.

**LEMON SHELL (1819-1883)**, served Tabernacle as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from 1860 to 1862. Born in Brunswick County, Virginia to persons of high social standing (his father was a physician), Shell was raised for the first nine years of his life in a home that was not professedly Christian. When his father died, however, his mother turned to God in her grief and was converted. Soon thereafter, she had her children baptized by the Rev. John Early. He felt ambivalent about religion as he grew up, but after nearly drowning in an accident, Shell began to think more seriously about his relationship with God. Soon thereafter, he attended a camp meeting in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, where encouraged by a sermon preached one evening, Shell was converted to the Christian faith. He joined the church without delay.

Later, while studying medicine, he found himself impressed by God that it was his duty to preach. After seeking the advice and counsel of several ministers, Shell was licensed to preach at the quarterly conference of the Person Circuit, and later received on trial at the North Carolina Annual Conference in November, 1844. Soon thereafter he was ordained first as deacon and later as an elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He would serve faithfully until his death in 1883, while serving the Pineville Circuit.

Shell was eulogized by his colleagues in the Conference as having been a "holy man. A man of the strictest integrity. His preaching was of the true evangelical type — simple, clear, forceful. He was a workman not ashamed of his work; nor of the Master who called him to it. He gloried in it and glorified God through it."

**JOSEPH HALSTEAD WHEELER (1810-1894)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches to which he was appointed on the Henderson Circuit from 1862-1864. Born in Newark, New Jersey, Wheeler moved to Charleston, South Carolina at the age of fourteen. At the age of twenty-three while living in Camden, S.C., Wheeler felt called to the ministry. At the time he was a successful businessman. He entered the South Carolina Conference in 1834, and served in that conference for the next seventeen years until the portion of territory in which he was serving was transferred to the North Carolina Conference. At that time (1851), Wheeler was stationed near Fayetteville. He had been Secretary of the South Carolina Conference before the transfer, and he would continue to share his gifts for ministry in his new conference relationship.

Wheeler was married to Anne Warren Wheeler, from Camden, S.C. Joseph and Anne had seven children, three of whom became ministers: Joseph, William and James W. Wheeler. The latter was a member of the Western North Carolina Conference.

Wheeler was eulogized by his colleagues in the conference as having been a moving speaker, philosophical and poetic, yet also plain and perspicuous in his speech. He was pious without being sanctimonious, a man of impeccable character.

**THOMAS PAGE RICAUD (1817-1900)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit from November, 1864 to the next session of the North Carolina Conference in November, 1865. (This minister's last name has two other variant spellings: "Riccard" and "Ricard") Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Ricaud was orphaned at a young age. He was adopted by a kinsman after his parents' death. This kinsman took Ricaud to live with his family in Mexico City, where he grew up. Ricaud received a liberal education, taking a special course in the University of Mexico in preparation for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church.

In the meantime, Ricaud enlisted with the revolutionists in the civil war in Mexico. He was wounded and taken prisoner while acting as a courier for the revolutionary forces. After the war was over and a new republic was set up in Mexico on the principles of liberty, Ricaud left Mexico for France. But after only a short stay in France, Ricaud returned to the United States where he eventually settled in Virginia. He was studying law when he attended a Methodist revival, was converted, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church a short time later.

Feeling called to the work of the ministry, Ricaud obtained a license to preach, and was admitted on trial into the Virginia Conference in November 1841 at that year's session held at Portsmouth. Later he transferred to the North Carolina Conference where he served for more than fifty years, dying in 1900 at Durham, N.C. At his death, Ricaud was remembered by his peers in the ministry as being a genial, Christlike man, cultured and fluent in speech, and a man who was pleasant and loving to all who knew him.



**IRA T. WYCHE (1816-1880)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from 1865 to 1868. Born in Brunswick County, Virginia, Wyche later moved with his parents to Granville County, N.C. His parents were already members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Wyche would receive significant religious training as he grew up. According to the record book of the Granville Circuit for 1836, Wyche was the class leader for the Oxford "society" in that year. The next year, Wyche entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church as a member on trial in the newly-formed North Carolina Conference. Four years later, Wyche would be received into full connection and ordained an elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Wyche would have a very full career as a minister in this conference. Not only did he travel numerous circuits, he also served at different times as the "presiding elder" of the Salisbury, New Bern, and Washington Districts of the North Carolina Conference. At one time he served as the area agent for the American Bible Society. Later he would serve as the Secretary of the North Carolina Conference for many years. When he died after serving some forty-three years in the conference, Wyche was serving the same church in which he was once the class leader! At his death, he was remembered as a "man of one work, and that work was to do good and to save souls."

Wyche's father, Henry T. Wyche was President of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad. His sister, Elizabeth, married a fellow minister in the North Carolina Conference: John Tillett who also served at Tabernacle. Ira Wyche's son, L.O. Wyche, also served as a minister in the North Carolina Conference.

**HENRY H. GIBBONS (1818-1887)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit from 1868 to 1872. Born in Green County, Gibbons was converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church when he was thirteen years old, at "Old Rainbow," Snow Hill Circuit, under the ministry of Henry Speck. Gibbons served as a class leader, exhorter, or local preacher, after he was grown, until he joined the North Carolina Conference at Warrenton in November of 1850. He was ordained elder at the Conference held at Louisburg in 1852. His first appointment was the Snow Hill Circuit (his home circuit!). Gibbons would serve in the North Carolina Conference for more than thirty-four years, being granted the superannuate relationship in 1885 at the Conference session held in Wilmington, N.C. He would die at Mt. Olive in 1887.

Gibbons was married to Elizabeth Hardy Gibbons. The couple had seven children. Gibbons father was also a minister, the Rev. John Gibbons. Gibbons was remembered in William Wallace White's diaries as having preached "God-fearing sermons" and having drawn large congregations at the protracted meeting he held on the circuit.

**AUGUSTUS ALLEN BOSHAMER (1847-1881)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit from 1872 to 1876. Born at Yanceyville in Caswell County, N.C., Boshamer spent his childhood years in Caswell, Person, and Granville counties. Boshamer was converted under the ministry of Paul J. Carraway in the autumn of 1865 in Roxboro, N.C. Some time after his conversion and having joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, Boshamer became impressed that it was his duty to preach the Gospel. In the summer of 1870, he was licensed as a local preacher, and he was received on trial as a minister in the North Carolina Conference. When Boshamer was appointed to the Henderson Circuit in 1872, it was only his second appointment, but already he was recognized as one of the more promising young ministers in the conference. As one of his colleagues remarked at his death, "He remained on Henderson Circuit four years and perhaps no man ever enjoyed more of love, confidence, and admiration of any charge than he did of the people on the Henderson Circuit." At his death, in 1881, Boshamer was the pastor of the Edenton Street Station, in Raleigh, N.C. He was remembered for his remarkable ability for preaching, and many believed that this was the reason for his unusually rapid promotion within the Conference.

The year before his death, Boshamer was married to Virginia Wall Marshall Boshamer. He contracted typhoid fever later that year and died in September 1881, just shy of his thirty-fifth birthday!

**JUNIUS P. MOORE (1815-1878)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches to which he was appointed on the Henderson Circuit from 1876-1877. This would have been the last appointment Moore lived to complete. Moore had earlier served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit from 1854 to 1855.

**ROBERT OSWALD BURTON (1811-1891)**, served Tabernacle Church as part of the Henderson Circuit to which he was assigned from the session of annual conference in 1877 to the next session of the annual conference in 1878. Born in Lynchburg Virginia, Burton was educated at West Point Military Academy. He joined the Virginia Conference at Petersburg in 1833, and was ordained deacon that year. In 1837, Burton was ordained elder. He would serve in the Virginia and North Carolina Annual Conferences for nearly fifty-four years before being retired in 1891. He died at home in Halifax County, NC, in 1891.

Burton may have been the only minister to serve Tabernacle as many as four times as part of three different circuits over the long tenure of his ministry. Listed as one of the ministers assigned to the Granville Circuit in 1834, Burton also served the Henderson Circuit from 1845-1846, and again later in 1878. Still later, at the very end of his ministry, Burton returned to the churches of the Ridgeway Circuit which included Tabernacle to serve out his last year as an active minister during 1889. Burton also served as agent of the nearby Randolph-Macon College from 1838-1842. He would serve as presiding elder on four different occasions in the two conferences of Virginia and North Carolina as well as a chaplain to the military encampment near Garysburg, NC in 1864 during the War Between the States.

At his death, his close friend and colleague, John Nelson Cole eulogized Burton as "one of our greatest preachers." "He was a man of very positive convictions. He often stood alone in his opinions, but he was true even when standing alone." Regarded as a master of oratory, and a powerful preacher, Burton was also praised for his "wonderfully analytic mind for the teachings of the Scriptures." In particular, Burton's greatest theme for preaching was the doctrine of the atonement.

Burton was married twice. The first time he married Elizabeth H. Joyner. Later he married Mary Olivia Pearson.

**LUCIAN JEROME HOLDEN (1844-1899)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit to which he was appointed from 1878 to 1879. Born in Orange County, NC, Holden was converted in 1872 at New Sharon Church in the same county under the ministry of Dr. L. W. Crawford. His conversion occurred in unusual circumstances "in which he resisted the convicting power of God's spirit and fled like Jonah, only to return and finally accept the grace of God." Soon after his conversion, Holden was licensed to preach and was received into the North Carolina Conference at Goldsboro, Dec. 11th, 1873. He was ordained deacon in 1875, and was ordained elder in 1877. For twenty-six years, Holden served as an active minister in the conference and it was noted at his death that he "always received his appointments with cheerfulness." He would die in 1899 while still serving as a pastor in the Conference.

At his death he was remembered by his colleagues in ministry that Holden was a "man of forceful intellect, having a legal turn of mind and good business capacity." "His sermons were pointed, earnest, and evangelical." For the last few years of his service as a minister, he had very poor health, yet he plodded on in service for his Lord.

**RICHARD STANFORD WEBB (1837-1901)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1879 to 1883. Born in Person County, NC, Webb joined the North Carolina Conference in 1859 on trial. He was ordained deacon in 1861 and was ordained elder in 1863. After joining the Conference, he "never missed the roll call at Annual Conference in forty-two years." Just two days prior to his death, Webb asked his presiding elder to submit his name for the "retired relation" to the Conference. Webb died at his home in Greensboro in 1901.

**I. M. GRIFFITH** is listed as serving Tabernacle Church from 1883 to 1885 in the "register of pastors" in our local church records. However, the records of the North Carolina Conference differ in this matter. Griffith served an adjacent circuit, and may have preached in

this area at some point. The diary of William Wallace White does not list Griffith as preaching on the Ridgeway Circuit during this period of time either.]

**JOSEPH JOHN RENN (1839-1906)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Henderson Circuit from 1882 to 1884, probably along with I. M. Griffith. Born in Warren County, NC, Renn grew up in the country, growing strong and healthy. During the War Between the States, Renn served in the Confederate Army, part of Company C, 12th Regiment N. C. State troops. He fought in many battles, and was captured and imprisoned in Elmira, New York. Renn was licensed to preach by the quarterly conference at Warrenton, NC, in 1867, and preached his first sermon in old Cokesbury Church, Warren County, on the text, "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (Hebrews 13:14). After serving as a supply preacher for several years, he joined the North Carolina Conference at New Bern in 1869. He was ordained deacon in 1871, and was ordained elder in 1874. When the General Conference divided the state of North Carolina into two separate conferences, Renn became a member of the Western North Carolina Conference. He went on to serve as a presiding elder three times during his career as a minister in the conference.

Renn was chosen to deliver an address at the Centennial of Methodism in Raleigh NC, in 1876, which was later published in a book edited by Dr. L. S. Burkhead. Renn was also the author of a book, *The Image of God in Man*. Rutherford College honored him with an honorary doctorate in recognition for his many accomplishments. He was remembered at his death for being a great student of the Bible, an accurate scholar and a great mind who gleaned much from his carefully selected library.

Renn was married twice. First he was married to Susan Williams Twisdale, The couple had eight children. After his first wife died, Renn married (in 1884) Roberta L. Reavis.

#### **THE RIDGEWAY CIRCUIT: 1885 to 1919**

**JOHN NELSON COLE (1853-1915)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the newly formed Ridgeway Circuit to which he was assigned in December 1885. He would serve this circuit until the session of the North Carolina Annual Conference held in 1888. Born in Franklinton, NC, Cole was educated first at Holcomb Military Institute, Oxford, NC, and later completed his education at Randolph-Macon College, Boydton, VA. He was admitted into the North Carolina Conference in 1879, having been converted some years earlier at the age of eighteen. Cole would serve the North Carolina Conference for some thirty-six years before dying in 1915 while serving as Superintendent of the Methodist Orphanage in Raleigh. In 1910, he was elected to attend the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in Asheville, NC. He was known in the conference for his "simple and pure diction, one aspect of his great talent as a writer." But many would agree that his "most enduring monument" as a minister was the work he did at the Methodist Orphanage in Raleigh.

Cole was married to Elizabeth Marshall Jones Cole from Mecklenburg County, Virginia. Perhaps due in part to the connection of Cole's wife with members of the congregation at Tabernacle who lived in Mecklenburg County, the Coles would maintain a strong relationship with members of Tabernacle Church long after Cole had been appointed to serve other churches. In particular, Cole maintained his friendship with the families of W.H. Burwell and W.W. White in later years. W.W. White's diary records that Cole and his family came to live with his family for over a month at one point. While Cole was serving the nearby Warrenton Circuit from 1889-1890, he joined his successor, R.O. Burton to conduct services on the Ridgeway Circuit numerous times.

Cole was probably best remembered by members of Tabernacle because he was pastor of the Circuit during the time when members of Tabernacle constructed the new building of a sanctuary in 1888. A church was also built and dedicated at Middleburg that same year while Cole was pastor of the Circuit. While Cole was Superintendent of the Methodist Orphanage, the Burwell family contributed money toward the work of the orphanage and one of the cottages was named after Lucy Cole Burwell, a member of this congregation. Mrs. Burwell was John Cole's sister, having come to this area while her brother was pastor of the circuit. After serving for a while as governess to the Burwell family, Miss Cole married W.H. Burwell.



**ROBERT OSWALD BURTON, D.D. (1811-1891)**, served Tabernacle as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1888 to 1889. At the session of the North Carolina Conference for 1889, Burton was placed on the "superannuated list" after refusing to be retired voluntarily. He would have been seventy-seven years old when he served Tabernacle as part of the Ridgeway Circuit. Burton died at his home in Halifax County, in 1891. (See previous references to his service as pastor of Tabernacle on the Granville Circuit in 1835 and on the Henderson Circuit in 1878).

**JOHN WESLEY JENKINS (1832-1906)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit to which he was appointed from 1889 to 1892. Born in Granville County, Jenkins received a "good academic education, and having taught for some time after leaving school, he entered the ministry with a better scholastic preparation than most young men of his day". Jenkins was received on trial into the North Carolina Conference in December 1858. Jenkins would serve the North Carolina Conference for more than forty-eight years until his death in 1906, at which time he was serving as the first Superintendent and founder of the Methodist Orphanage in Raleigh, N.C.

Jenkins was married four times, his last wife Mattie Virginia Atwater Jenkins surviving him with six children. At his death, Jenkins was eulogized as having been the kind of preacher who was "solid if not brilliant. He was never dull. From the store-house of his mind and heart, cultured and refined by grace, he brought forth things new and old to interest and edify the most cultured of his parishioners; and like his Master, the common people heard him gladly."

**JOHN ALBERT HORNADAY (1853-1926)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches of the Ridgeway Circuit to which he was appointed from Dec. 1892 to Dec. 1896. Born in Randolph County, NC, Hornaday left home at the age of sixteen to pursue a life for himself, his family being very poor. By the age of twenty, he had established a business in Laurinburg, NC. Later, Hornaday was converted under the ministry of W.H. Moore in Chatham County, NC. He then transferred his membership from the Presbyterian Church to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and decided to become a minister. After serving for three years as a licensed exhorter, Hornaday was granted a license to preach from the Pittsboro charge in 1882. He was admitted on trial to the North Carolina Conference in 1883 and admitted into full connection in 1886, and ordained deacon. He was ordained elder in 1888. Hornaday served more than forty years as a pastor in the conference before retiring in 1922. He died at this home in Maxton, NC, in 1926.

Hornaday was married to Lucretia Ellen McCall Hornaday (a sister of the Revs. F.B. and J. Calton McCall). The couple had five sons, one of whom, Clifford L. Hornaday, served as President of Henderson-Brown College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Hornaday was remembered by his colleagues in ministry for his forthrightness in stating his opinions, his innocent humor, and his efforts to be correct in his preaching and manner despite having had few advantages in his early years. Hornaday will be remembered at Tabernacle, among other things, for having established a good set of church records from what was previously very scattered and haphazardly kept books.

**THOMAS J. DAILY (1849-1935)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches of the Ridgeway Circuit from Dec. 1896 to Dec. 1900. Born in Alamance County, NC, Daily was converted in 1877 and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church at Reidsville, NC that same year. He was licensed to preach by the quarterly conference of the Wentworth Circuit in 1880, and served the next year as a local preacher assisting his pastor and other area preachers in revival services. Before being admitted on trial to the North Carolina Conference in 1883, Daily had served as a supply pastor at the Pitt Mission for almost two years. He was ordained an elder in 1884. He would serve as an active minister for some thirty years before ill health caused him to take leave from the conference. Later he would return to active service in the conference to serve as pastor of the North and South Henderson charge. Then, once more ill health forced him to retire, this time permanently. Still, Daily would live on for almost twenty more years before dying at his home in Deland, Florida in 1935. He was married to Amanda B. Watlington Daily.

At his death he was remembered by his peers in ministry as having been a "man who cared nothing for show, who loved simplicity, being a modest man who was satisfied to live the plain life of a Methodist preacher."

**DANIEL LUTHER EARNHARDT** (1854-1928), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1900 to 1902. Born in Rowan County, N.C., of Lutheran parentage, Earnhardt joined that church in 1876, and in 1878 he united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He was licensed to preach in February 1878, and joined the North Carolina Conference the same year at its session in Charlotte. He was ordained a deacon in 1880, and an elder in 1883. At the conference held at the close of 1920, Earnhardt retired after some forty-two years of service in the conference. He spent the last years of his life cultivating a small farm in Durham, N.C.

At the time of his death, Earnhardt was eulogized as having been "recognized as a strong preacher by all the thoughtful people in every charge that he served." He was noted for his humor which he used to great effectiveness in his ministry. "As a preacher he never dealt in platitudes, but he constantly searched the word of God for a deeper setting of the things of the kingdom."

Earnhardt was married to Helen Frances Ayers Earnhardt. The couple had twelve children. Among the children, Daniel E. Earnhardt became a minister like his father, serving for many years in the North Carolina Conference.

**JACOB ALEXANDER LEE** (1856-1932), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1902 to 1903. Born near Shelby in Cleveland County, Lee was educated at Boiling Springs Academy and Rutherfordton College. Throughout his life, Lee was an avid student, known by his peers in the ministry as a well-informed man of the Gospel. Lee was licensed to preach in 1879, and joined the North Carolina Conference in 1882, being ordained deacon that same year and ordained elder in 1886.

At the close of 1903, Lee was forced to retire from active ministry for several years because of throat trouble. He returned to the ministry in 1906 and served until his retirement in 1918. In retirement, Lee lived in Shelby and Mt. Gilead, N.C. Lee was married to Sara Cynthia Grigg Lee. The couple had three children.

Lee was remembered at his death as having been a gentle, kind, and sympathetic pastor. He preached with authority, combining his experimental knowledge of Christ with his thoughtful study of Scripture. Lee was remembered in the diary of William Wallace White as having begun his time as pastor very ill. Later he had recovered enough to preach a few times before his retirement.

**LEONIDAS M. CHAFFIN** (1863-1939), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1903 to 1907. Born in Chatham County, Chaffin joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Campground, Fayetteville, N.C., in 1883. He was educated at Trinity College (now Duke University), and joined the North Carolina Conference in 1887. Like his father, who was also a pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Chaffin would serve as an itinerant minister for more than fifty years before retiring from the active ministry. According to conference records, Chaffin was appointed to the Warren Circuit from 1903 to 1906 and to the Ridgeway Circuit in 1907. We believe, however, that due to the illness of his predecessor and other circumstances, that Chaffin served the churches of the Ridgeway Circuit from the session of the annual conference held in 1903 until 1907. For a portion of this time, Chaffin may have served what would later be considered two different circuits. He died at his home in Jonesboro, N.C., in 1939.

At his death, Chaffin was eulogized by one of his colleagues in the ministry as having been known "for his sincerity and honesty and steadfast loyalty to Christ and his cause. He was fearless and uncompromising in his convictions and preaching. He was firm but approachable and neighborly."

**BERZILLAI C. ALLRED** (1849-1935), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1907 to 1911. Born in Randolph County N.C., Allred joined the North Carolina Conference when it met at Statesville in 1883. Allred was educated at Trinity

College before that institution was moved to Durham. He served as a member of the North Carolina Conference for thirty-four years, before retiring in 1917. He died at his daughter's home in Oxford, N.C., in 1935.

Allred was married twice: first to Sallie J. Rives Allred of Chatham County, and later, to Dora Kimball Allred of Granville County.

**JOSEPH E. HOLDEN (1869-1927)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit from 1911 to 1916. Born in Franklin County, N.C., Holden was converted to Christianity and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at the age of twelve years old. After deciding to enter the ministry, Holden set about to prepare himself by studying at Trinity College from which he graduated in 1900. He served as a supply preacher for almost a year following his graduation from college before joining the North Carolina Conference. He would serve for over a quarter of a century as a minister in the conference before dying while serving as pastor in Morehead City in 1927.

One of the members of our church, Holden Norwood, was named for Rev. Holden. Holden was married to Mattie Angell Holden of Virginia. The couple had only one child who was named Lucille. During his years in the conference, Holden served as the secretary of the Conference Extension Board. He was noted for his painstaking work and fairminded way of distributing this fund to the needy churches on the conference. Holden was remembered by his peers in the ministry as a person who enjoyed a well-rounded, robust life. He had a natural gift for humor and for poetry, some of his poems being printed during his lifetime. He was also a great lover of sports and the outdoors.

Members of Tabernacle remember that "Preacher Holden" could not control his team of horses. After services at Tabernacle, members would hold the team while Holden got in the buggy. Then everyone stood back! "You never knew which way they might go!"

**WILLIAM CALHOUN MERRITT (1866-1940)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Ridgeway Circuit to which he was appointed from 1916 to 1919. Born in Sampson County, Merritt entered Trinity College in 1889 and was a student there when the college was moved to Durham. He was a member of the first class of that institution to graduate after the move to Durham. He joined the North Carolina Conference in 1893. Merritt would serve as a member of the conference for some forty-four years, retiring in 1937. He died in Durham three years after retirement, in 1940.

At the time of his death, one of his colleagues in the ministry said of him: "Rev. W.C. Merritt was not a sensational preacher, his work did not make newspaper copy, and I imagine that the people he served have already forgotten most of his sermons; but they will never forget the noble face which reflected his Christian character, and his pure sympathetic heart. They will never forget what he was."

Merritt was married to Mary Woodley Merritt, who he met at the first charge he served at Roper, N.C. The Merritts had four children, all of whom they managed to educate despite a meager salary throughout his career as a minister.

#### **THE MIDDLEBURG CIRCUIT: 1919 to 1959**

**EFF DAVID DODD (1884-1966)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was appointed from 1919 to 1923. Born in Clayton, Johnston County, N.C., Dodd attended Trinity College (now Duke University) where he earned the B.A. degree. After having served three years as an accepted supply, Dodd was admitted into the North Carolina Conference in 1912, at which time he was ordained deacon. Three years later, in 1915, Dodd was ordained Elder. He would serve for thirty-six years as an itinerant minister in the N.C. Conference. In 1948, Dodd retired from the conference living in Fuquay-Varina until his death in 1966.

Dodd was married to Nora F. Dodd. The couple had two children: David Dodd and Christine Dodd Johnson.

At the time of his death, Dodd was eulogized by a fellow minister as having been a good preacher. "He proclaimed with profound sincerity The Unsearchable Riches of Christ. He knew what he believed, why he believed, and Whom he believed." Dodd is remembered by longtime members of Tabernacle as being an even-keeled person who was dedicated in serving the people in his care. The Brewer family thought so much of the Dodd family that they



named a daughter, Christine Brewer Samford after the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Dodd.

Dodd was the first person appointed to serve the Middleburg Circuit when it was formed in 1919 by action of the North Carolina Conference.

**JESSE THOMAS DRAPER** (1865-1954), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was appointed from 1923 to 1927. Born in Northampton County, Draper was converted at the age of twelve, an event which he remembered clearly throughout his life, and which he shared freely with all persons. At the age of eighteen, Draper dedicated his life to God's service, and two years later, in 1885, he decided to enter the ministry, feeling that God was calling him to this work. At this point in time, Draper was relatively uneducated. He began his studies first at Jackson Academy, then later at Suffolk Military Academy, before enrolling at Randolph-Macon College where he graduated with a B.A. degree in 1890. After teaching for one year, Draper joined the North Carolina Conference and served as an itinerant minister for the next forty-six years before retiring in 1937. In retirement, Draper and his wife Annie Bridgers Draper lived in Warrenton, N.C. He died in 1954.

Members of Tabernacle remember Draper for his pious, stern, no-nonsense demeanor.

**PRESTON DEWITT WOODALL** (1872-1957), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was appointed from 1927 to 1932. Born in Johnston County, Woodall attended the public schools of that county before going on to Trinity College where he graduated in 1902. He later went on to Boston College where he took a special course in public speaking. Woodall was admitted on trial into the North Carolina Conference in 1899. He was received into full connection in the Conference in 1903. He served forty years in the conference before retiring in 1939 because of poor health.

Woodall is remembered by his colleagues in ministry and his former parishioners for two things: his preaching and his pastoral care. As one member has said, "That man was born to preach." As a fellow pastor said, "It did not take him long to preach a sermon, but when he had finished the people were unanimous in pronouncing it good. Woodall was renowned for using a chalkboard to illustrate his sermons.

During the Depression years in which he served the churches of the Middleburg Circuit, Woodall was often seen coming around the bend in the road in his "little Whippet car" for his appointment to preach or to visit the sick. One of his peers in the ministry stated at the time of Woodall's death that "the only criticism of Preston Woodall was that he spent too little time in relaxation and rest and too much time with people who were sick." Many believe that this overwork led him to retire earlier than he should have. Following his retirement, Woodall lived for eighteen more years, during which time he authored a pamphlet which became somewhat popular in this region. Woodall told members of Tabernacle in later years that he had learned some things about how to deal with life's worries after having dealt with worries ineffectively during the greater part of his life.

Woodall married Elizabeth Brinkley Woodall. The couple married in 1913. Woodall certainly made a great impression on a number of members in Tabernacle Church. As one member has said, "He was as Godly a man as I have ever known, one in whom you could see Jesus Christ."

**J. HERBERT MILLER, SR.** (1889-1974), served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was appointed from 1932-1934. Born in Hertford, N.C., Miller attended Belvedere Academy and graduated from Trinity College with an A.B. degree. He completed his ministerial studies at the Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, Tennessee. After serving as a schoolteacher for one year in Greene County, Miller entered the ministry joining the North Carolina Conference in 1912. Miller would serve for forty-nine years as an active minister in the Conference. Retiring in 1971, Miller would die at his home in Durham in 1974.

Miller was married to Elsie McGlaughon Miller of Wilmington, N.C. The couple had three sons: James H. Miller, Jr., who is a United Methodist minister serving in the North Carolina Conference as pastor of First UMC, Cary, N.C.; E. Edmond Miller, and Kenneth McGlaughon Miller.

# **WORRY**

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Miller was remembered by his colleagues in the Conference as being a man who never sought out his appointments. "He only asked for a place to serve and accepted his place gladly." Miller was noted for his humility and thoughtfulness as a pastor throughout his long ministry in the Conference. Members of Tabernacle remember that on Sunday evenings Miller and one of his sons would go visit a blind woman who lived near Drewry. Miller's son would play music for the blind woman.

**JAMES A. DAILEY (1868-1945)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was appointed from 1934 to 1936. Dailey joined the North Carolina Conference in 1897. After forty-three years of faithful service, Dailey retired from the conference in 1940. He died five years later of a heart attack.

From Alamance County himself, Dailey married Matilda Howland Dailey of Graham, N.C. The couple had three children. Dailey was remembered by his colleagues in the conference as having a jolly disposition. As a preacher some thought he was at his best during a revival. This estimation would match up well with the memory which members of Tabernacle have of Dailey. He is remembered as being a stout and distinguished looking man who was "quite a Methodist preacher, more like one of the circuit riders" than most other ministers of his day.

**DWIGHT A. PETTY (1889-1971)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches to which he was assigned on the Middleburg Circuit from 1936 to 1940. Petty was born in Chatham County, N.C., but was raised in Durham. Petty graduated from Trinity College in 1918. In December of that same year, Petty joined the North Carolina Conference, where he would serve for forty-two and a half years. Petty later journeyed north to study at Yale Divinity School, graduating with the B. Divinity degree in 1927. At his death in 1971, Petty was remembered by his colleagues in the ministry as having been energetic, zealous, scholarly, and sincerely committed to the tasks of the ministry.

Petty was married to Pearl Griffin Petty. The couple had two children: Burke L. and Bernard G. Petty. Petty is remembered by members of Tabernacle as being meticulous in the keeping of records and very interested in the development of the Women's Society of Christian Service. Petty and his wife, Pearl, are credited with helping to organize the W.S.C.S. group at Tabernacle in 1938. Petty also published a monthly magazine for the circuit called "The Messenger." This glossy paper was filled with some regional and world news in Methodism, but it was more attuned to local events and concerns.

**THOMAS W. LEE (1878-1963)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was assigned from 1940 to 1946. Born in Gates County, N.C., Lee attended the county schools there before going on to graduate from Elizabeth City High School. He then attended Trinity College (now Duke University) and later he would attend Boston and Emory Universities in the course of his preparation for service as a minister in the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Church. Lee was admitted into the N.C. Conference in 1912 and was ordained an elder in 1916. He would serve as an active minister in the conference for thirty-five years before retiring. He died in 1963.

Lee was married twice, his second marriage being to Clara Powell Lee. At the time of his death, Lee was remembered by his colleagues in the conference as being "earnest rather than eloquent, sincere rather than showy, a plain preacher of a simple gospel." Members of Tabernacle remember Lee as being "down to earth" in his manner and ministry with the congregations under his care.

One story, in particular, seems worthy of remembering: Soon after Lee arrived on his new circuit, Lee was asked by a member of one of the churches "how he liked things here." Lee replied, "I will tell you what I told folks at the last churches I have pastored. How do I like it? I like it fine. I settled that when I was ordained. I knew I would like it here long ago because I agreed to go where I am sent."

**LLOYD C. BROTHERS (1894-1984)**, served Tabernacle Church as one of the churches of the Middleburg Circuit to which he was appointed from 1946 to 1950. Raised in Elizabeth City, N.C., Brothers was a graduate of Trinity College, completing requirements for his



degree in 1917. Brothers served as a pastor in the North Carolina Conference for forty-three years before retiring from the active ministry in 1961. Brothers was ordained elder in 1918 and was admitted into the conference in 1919. During World War I he served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

Brothers was married to Corrie Lee Page Brothers in 1918. Mrs. Brothers died in 1982. Rev. Brothers died in September, 1984. He had been a resident of the Royalwood Nursing Home in Torrance, California for the years immediately preceding his death.

Members of our church remember Brothers as having a "stern, businesslike, no-nonsense" manner in his ministry. To some, he could have fitted the role of bishop very well. Brothers was also remembered for his punctuality. Soon after coming to this area, Brothers announced that since he was serving a five-point charge which was geographically ill-located he would be present "at the appointed hour" and "at other times he would be at the parsonage in Middleburg where he could be reached in case of need."

**HARRY LEE ROGERS (1912-1981)**, served as pastor of Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was assigned from 1950 to 1953. Rogers was the son of the Rev. C.T. and Mrs. Calla Mann Rogers. As a young man, Rogers was called to the Christian ministry. He studied at Asbury College where he earned a Bachelor's degree, at Emory University where he received his ministerial degree, and later at Duke and Harvard Universities. During World War II, Rogers served in the chaplaincy of the U.S. Air Force.

After more than thirty years of service in the itinerant ministry, Rogers took disability leave in 1970 because of ill health. He retired from the active ministry in 1978. After a long period of poor health, Rogers died July 12, 1981. Rogers was married to Jessie Jones Rogers. The couple had four children. One of these children, Harry L. Rogers, Jr. became a missionary to the Philippines.

**JOHN E. WOOD (1919- )**, served as pastor of Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was assigned from 1953 to 1955. Wood served several charges before being ordained deacon in 1955. In 1957, Wood was ordained elder, and in 1961, he was admitted into the North Carolina Conference. In 1981, Wood was placed on disability leave by the Conference. He has served more than twenty-eight years.

Wood is currently living in Henderson, NC. He is married to Fleeta Wood. The couple have one child named Edward.

During the first months of Wood's tenure as pastor, an addition at the rear of the church sanctuary was completed. This addition of four classrooms and two bathrooms enabled an expansion of the Sunday School program during the decade of 1955 to 1965.

**WILFORD D. WISE (1916- )**, served as pastor of Tabernacle Church as one of the churches on the Middleburg Circuit to which he was assigned from 1955 to 1959. Wise was ordained deacon in 1955. In 1958, he was ordained elder, and was admitted to the North Carolina Conference in 1959. Wise was placed on disability leave in 1976 and was retired from the N.C. Conference in 1982.

Wise is currently living in Swansboro, N.C. He is married to Hulda Wise. The couple have two children: Denny Claude Wise and Wanda Wise. Denny C. Wise, is a pastor in the North Carolina Conference serving the Cokesbury UMC in Stedman, NC.

During Wise's tenure as pastor, the porch to the sanctuary of the church was added. Although he experienced bad health while pastor of the Middleburg Circuit, Wise was dedicated to seeing the Middleburg Circuit divided into a more manageable charge alignment. Presiding over the charge division during his final months as pastor, Wise exercised good judgment in dealing with the mixed feelings which the prospective division evoked among members of the different congregations. He has been described by a member of our church as having a "vision ahead of his time" in this regard. In addition, during Wise's tenure as pastor, the Methodist Youth Fellowship was organized. This was the first time that an active youth group was organized in the church.

#### **TABERNACLE STATION (STUDENT) CHARGE: 1959 to 1974**

**MILTON T. MANN (1935- )**, served Tabernacle Church as the first student pastor assigned to Tabernacle as a "station charge." Hailing from Sanford, N.C., Mann arrived in Townsville in 1959 after his first year in seminary at Duke Divinity School. For the next two years, Mann would serve Tabernacle while completing requirements for his M. Div. degree. During this time, Mann lived in an apartment at the home of Christine and Carl Samford on Hwy 39 between Townsville and Williamsboro. A bachelor at the time, Mann plunged his energy into working with the youth in the Townsville area in the Methodist Youth Fellowship. Having majored in music during his undergraduate work, Mann was something of a "pied piper" with the youth in the community. As one member noted, "If he said, 'March into Kerr Lake', they would follow and never ask why." Mann is a member of the North Carolina Conference, currently serving Garber UMC, New Bern, NC. Milton is married to Gaye Mann. The couple have four children: two boys and two girls.

**AARON MOSS (19 - )**, served Tabernacle Church as a student pastor from 1961 to 1963. During the two years Moss served Tabernacle as pastor, he worked toward completion of the requirements for his M. Div. degree which he received from Duke Divinity School in 1963. During the first year and a half that the Moss family lived in Townsville, they lived in the apartment at the Samford home which the church rented in lieu of a parsonage. However, during the latter part of Moss's tenure as pastor, the church built a parsonage in Townsville on Hwy 39. During the last six months Aaron was pastor, he and his wife became the first family to dwell in the church's parsonage. Aaron is a member of the Western North Carolina Conference, currently serving First UMC, China Grove, NC. Aaron is married to Emma Lou Noel Moss. The couple have three children: Tammy and Julia Anne (named for our own Julia and Anne Brewer!), and one boy, John Robert.

**WILLIAM F. MCMAHAN (19 - )**, served Tabernacle Church as a student pastor from 1963 to 1964. While pastor, McMahan was working toward completion of this M. Div. degree from Duke Divinity School. After one year, McMahan was appointed to serve another charge. Bill is currently a member of the Virginia Conference. He is married to Suzanne McMahan. The couple have four children.

**JULIAN WEISNER (19 - )**, served Tabernacle Church as a student pastor from 1964 to 1965. While pastor, Weisner was working toward completion of this M. Div. degree from Duke Divinity School. After completing his degree, Weisner returned to his native South Carolina where he is a member of the South Carolina Conference, currently serving United Methodist Church in Conway, SC. Julian is married to Martha Ann Weisner. The couple have three children. Members of Tabernacle remember Julian's enthusiasm for music.

**EARL DAVIS (1937- )**, served Tabernacle Church as a student pastor from 1965 to 1967. While pastor, Davis was working toward completion of his M. Div. degree from Duke Divinity School. Davis is remembered as having been interested in hospital ministry while here as pastor. Following the completion of his seminary work, Davis did go into hospital chaplaincy. Currently Earl is serving as Chaplain at Memorial Hospital in Macon, GA. He remains a member of the North Carolina Conference serving under special appointment as a chaplain. Earl is married to Pat Davis. The Ruth Circle was formed while he served as pastor of Tabernacle Church.

#### **TABERNACLE—MARROW'S CHAPEL CHARGE: 1974-1983**

**HENRY LOVELACE (1937- )**, served Tabernacle Church from 1967 to 1978 as a student pastor first, then (after 1974) as the pastor of the Tabernacle-Marrow's Chapel Charge. Lovelace, a graduate of Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, came to North Carolina from Arkansas where he had also served as a student pastor while attending college. Lovelace completed his M. Div. degree at Duke Divinity School in 1974, after which he served as full-time pastor of the two congregations. During Lovelace's tenure as pastor (the longest in the

history of the congregation) the United Methodist Youth Fellowship was re-organized after some years of inactivity;. Still later, Tabernacle built a fellowship building with rooms for classes as well as other activities. This effort was completed in 1977. Lovelace is a member of the North Carolina Annual Conference, currently serving Zebulon UMC. He is married to Ann Tidwell Lovelace. Henry and Ann have three children: Mark, Kimberly and Christopher.

**DOUGLAS LAMB (1926- )**, served Tabernacle Church from 1978 to 1981 as pastor of Tabernacle-Marrow's Chapel Charge. Raised in Vance County, Lamb was an active member of City Road UMC, Henderson, NC, for many years before deciding to pursue the ordained ministry, having been a "lay speaker" for several years in that church. A graduate of Duke Divinity School, Lamb is a member of the North Carolina Annual Conference currently serving Cherry Point UMC in Havelock, NC. He is married to Margaret Parrott Lamb. Doug and Margaret have two children, boys, who now have families of their own.

**ROBERT HORTON (1955- )**, served Tabernacle Church from August 1981 to 1983 as first the student pastor and later the full-time pastor of Tabernacle-Marrow's Chapel Charge. While serving as pastor, Horton completed his M. Div. degree at Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Wake Forest, NC. During the latter months of Horton's tenure as pastor, the decision was made for both Marrow's Chapel and Tabernacle to become "station charges" at the next annual conference session. Horton and his wife Myra Eason Horton are currently living in Durham, NC, where they both work. Robert and Myra have one child, Rebekah Ashley.

#### **TABERNACLE STATION CHARGE: 1983 to date**

**MICHAEL G. CARTWRIGHT (1957- )**, has served Tabernacle Church since June, 1983. Just prior to having come to Tabernacle, Cartwright completed his M. Div. degree at Duke Divinity School. Michael and his wife Mary Wilder Cartwright, who is also a United Methodist minister, both hail from Arkansas where they graduated from Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas in 1979. Michael and Mary are both probationary members of the North Arkansas Conference. Michael was ordained deacon in 1980 and Mary was ordained deacon in 1984.



### APPENDIX THREE

Near the very end of our project of writing, we discovered a series of diaries by a Methodist circuit rider named Thomas Mann. Mann was from Amherst County, Virginia. Having been converted at age nineteen, Mann became a travelling preacher soon thereafter. During the remainder of his life, Mann served thirty five years in the Virginia Conference. Toward the end of his life, he was retired briefly, then was restored to active service until the Conference of 1830, when, again he was retired. He died later that year.

Mann appears to have travelled in this area of northcentral North Carolina frequently.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1805, references in his journal are made to Howell, Edmund and Lewis (or Louis) Taylor. He mentions preaching at "Taylor's Meeting House" several times. Given the lack of specifics, this latter building may have been the building near Edmund Taylor's home "Longwood" at which the 1805 Conference was held, a predecessor to Marrow's Chapel Church, or it may refer to the Tabernacle itself. We cannot tell.

However, Mann specifically mentioned preaching at "the Tabernacle Meeting House" on several occasions in 1816. The first such occasion was on Sunday July 4th, 1816. We quote from Mann's Journal:

Lord's Day, 4th. Preached at Tabernacle Meeting House from Matthew 24:14; Had but few. Dined at old Brother Swards. Prayed with them and rode home with John Seward. Edward Moore with us.

Mann came to the Tabernacle Meeting House again on September 29th, 1816 after preaching at Salem Meeting House (near Oxford) and Canaan Meeting House during the two days preceding his visit.

Sunday 29th. Preached at Tabernacle Meeting House from I Thess. 4:16. The Lord was with us in mercy, love and power. My soul happy. Glory, glory, glory to God on high! Some shouted aloud the praises of God. Stayed at Jordan Richardson's.

Some years later on Saturday, December 16th, 1829, Mann was present for a quarterly meeting at Tabernacle Meeting House.

Saturday 16th. Quarterly Meeting began at the Tabernacle Meeting House. Thomas Burge preached. Then we held quarterly conference. I nominated Richard Whitaker and Henry Whyck and they were elected stewards of the circuit. Old Edward Dromgool resigned his office as steward. The old man, I think, acted very improperly in his office and I think is afraid of being called to account for his conduct which would be according to his (desarts). I do not fellowship his conduct at all, but I hope he will repent before he dies. I think he has treated me ill.

Still later in 1830, Mann returned to the Tabernacle while travelling on the Sussex Circuit in Southern Virginia, on January 13th and 14th.

Wednesday 13th. Preached at Hawkins Meeting House, Sussex Circuit for Thompson Garrard from Daniel 12:10. Garrard met the class. They turned out four of the Society for not attending the meetings. Some shouted. A good meeting. Mary Pigram prayed. Rode home with sister Pigram. Enjoyed myself with family. Rode with Garrard to Tabernacle Meeting House (next day). I preached from Rev. 22:1-2. They dropped William Malone that had been received by Thomas (Barmin) as Barnell Perkins objected against him coming in as a member as the cause yet remained for which he was turned out. Some more were dropped. John Kirby prayed. Rode and stayed with William Malones.

This is the last reference to our church in Mann's journal.

## COVER

<sup>1</sup>Woodcut on cover is used by permission of Duke University Press. Origin of woodcut is unknown. Also used on the cover of *From Wesley to Asbury: Studies in Early American Methodism*, by Frank Baker. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976), cover.

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>Susan L. Bracey, *Life By the Roaring Roanoke: A History of Mecklenburg County, Virginia* (Mecklenburg County: County Bicentennial Commission, 1977) pp. 102-3.

<sup>2</sup>*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 1980* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1980), p. 40f.

<sup>3</sup>"Deed to Tabernacle Methodist Episcopal Church, South" (1848), recorded in Granville County Courthouse *Book of Deeds*, Vol. 15, p. 125.

## CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup>Called by one historian, "the cradle of Methodism in North Carolina," the Roanoke Circuit was a large circuit which would later be divided numerous times as the movement grew in this area. Grissom's *History in Methodism in North Carolina*, Vol. 1, p. 66f offers a good summary of these early activities by circuit riders in the first decade of Methodist efforts in North Carolina. See also William Warren Sweet, *Methodism in American History* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1953), p. 72 note.

<sup>2</sup>Frederick Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), p. 75. Original document of Joseph Pilmoor's *Journal* unavailable.

<sup>3</sup>Sweet, pp. 71-6. See also Grissom, p. 40f.

<sup>4</sup>Sweet, pp. 72-3.

<sup>5</sup>Grissom, pp. 43-4, quoting *Journal* of Thomas Rankin.

<sup>6</sup>Grissom, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup>Grissom, p. 64, quoting from Nathan Bangs, *Life of Garrettson*, New York, 1829, p. 60.

<sup>8</sup>Tabernacle Historical Committee, *The Taylors of Tabernacle: The History of a Family*. (Brownsville, Tennessee: Tabernacle Historical Committee, 1957) pp. 5-6. Quoting *Journal* of Freeborn Garrettson, entry for June 12, 1777.

<sup>9</sup>Jesse Lee's *Journal*, reference lost, quoted in secondary sources dealing with Jesse Lee's life and ministry.

<sup>10</sup>Leroy M. Lee, *The Life and Times of The Rev. Jesse Lee* (Richmond, Virginia: John Early, 1848), pp. 64-5.

<sup>11</sup>Leroy M. Lee, p. 88. Quoting from Jesse Lee's *Journal*.

<sup>12</sup>Minton Thrift, *Memoir of The Reverend Jesse Lee with Extracts from His Journals* (New York: Myers and Smith, 1823), pp. 26-27.

<sup>13</sup>Thrift, pp. 27-35.

<sup>14</sup>Thrift, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup>Thrift, p. 56.

<sup>16</sup>Leroy M. Lee, p. 118.

## CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup>"Howell Taylor of Virginia," by William B. Hill, Boydton, Virginia, from *The Taylors of Tabernacle: The History of a Family*, Vol. I, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>See Mecklenburg County, Virginia, Courthouse records for 1776 and 1777.

<sup>3</sup>Bracey, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup>Bracey, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup>Bracey, pp. 37-8.

<sup>6</sup>Bracey, pp. 40-1.

<sup>7</sup>Bracey, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup>Bracey, pp. 41-2. Bracey seems to have made good sense out of a very confusing situation of multiple references.

<sup>9</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 5. Quoting Bennett, *History of Methodism in Virginia*.

<sup>10</sup>Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts, and Jacob S. Payton, editors *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* (in three volumes) Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1956), p. 359.

- <sup>11</sup>Clark, et. al., *Journal*, p. 360.
- <sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup>"A Biographical Sketch of the Taylor Family" by Joseph Taylor, included in *The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 9.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>16</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 8. See also records of Mecklenburg County Virginia, County Courthouse, for 1778.
- <sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup>Thomas Ware, *Sketches of the Life and Travels of Rev. Thomas Ware* (New York: Mason and Lane, 1839), pp. 167-9.
- <sup>19</sup>Ware, p. 170.
- <sup>20</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, pp. 510-11.
- <sup>21</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 642n. See reference to Bishop Whatcoat's *Journal* entries for June, 1790.
- <sup>22</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. I, p. 573.
- <sup>23</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 226.
- <sup>24</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. II, pp. 226-7.
- <sup>25</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 8.
- <sup>26</sup>Article on Taylor Family and "Longwood" home from Oxford Public Ledger, Newspaper, ca. 1941.
- <sup>27</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 430.
- <sup>28</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 448.
- <sup>29</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 462.
- <sup>30</sup>Asbury's *Journal*, Vol. II, pp. 462-3.
- <sup>31</sup>See article from Oxford Public Ledger Newspaper referred to above.
- <sup>32</sup>Bracey, *Life by the Roaring Roanoke*, p. 103.
- <sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup>Bracey, p. 112. Once again, Bracey offers a helpful resolution of diverse references.
- <sup>35</sup>Bracey, p. 344f.
- <sup>36</sup>Conversation with Mrs. Averil Taylor of Brownsville, Tennessee, August, 1984. Mrs. Taylor is a member of Tabernacle United Methodist Church on the Brownsville Circuit in the Memphis Conference of the United Methodist Church and was co-editor of *The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vols. I and II.

### CHAPTER THREE

- <sup>1</sup>"From Tabernacle, Virginia, to Tabernacle, Tennessee" by John Alexander Taylor, included in *The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 13.
- <sup>2</sup>"Brief History of the Church Building" found in *The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. xiv.
- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 14.
- <sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>6</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, p. 15. Quoting from "The Taylor Family in Early Methodist History" in the *Western Methodist Advocate*, September 12, 1867. W.C. Johnston, editor.
- <sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, pp. 66, 71, 78.
- <sup>9</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle*, Vol. I, pp. 126-130.
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.* p. 126.

### CHAPTER FOUR

- <sup>1</sup>*Thrill, Memoir of The Reverend Jesse Lee with Extracts from His Journals* p. 56.
- <sup>2</sup>"Minutes of the [Virginia] Conference for 1783" in bound volume of records in the Archives Room of the Methodist Building, Raleigh, N.C. *Conference Minutes 1773-1837*. Other references in this chapter regarding the appointments of preachers and membership statistics for the Roanoke and Granville Circuits of the Virginia Conference are taken from this source.
- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* See entries for 1779, 1820, and 1821.
- <sup>4</sup>"Church Book for Granville Circuit" 1836 from the Francis B. Hays Collection, Vol. 135. Richard Thornton Public Library, Oxford, North Carolina. No pagination. See entry titled "Tabernacle".



<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* The abbreviations from the original have been deleted, parenthetical information added.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* See listing for "Oxford".

<sup>3</sup>"Hargrove Family Genealogy" found in the Francis B. Hays Collection. Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, North Carolina.

<sup>4</sup>"Deed for Tabernacle Church: 1848" on record at Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, North Carolina. *Book of Deeds*, Vol. 15, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup>"Hargrove Family Genealogy" found in the Francis B. Hays Collection. Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, North Carolina.

<sup>6</sup>"Hargrove's Chapel United Methodist Church" entry found in *North Carolina Conference Historical Directory*. Joseph W. Watson, Conference Researcher, C. Franklin Grill, Conference Historian (Raleigh: North Carolina Conference Commission on Archives and History, 1984), p. 109.

## CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>1</sup>Sara Boyd, "History of Townsville, N.C." unpublished paper written ca. 1945. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>"Minutes of the North Carolina Conference" in bound volume *North Carolina Conference Journals: 1837-1900* kept in the Archives Room at the Methodist Building, Raleigh, North Carolina. Other references in this chapter regarding the appointments of ministers and membership statistics for the Granville, Henderson, and Ridgeway Circuits are taken from this source as well.

<sup>5</sup>*Diary of Captain William Wallace White: 1857-1900*, privately printed. Copy used by permission of Mr. Henry B. White, Townsville, North Carolina. p. 109.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.* This information was gathered from reading the entries found in the diaries of William Wallace White.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>Rather than list each note separately, we simply note that the following records of activities on the Henderson Circuit are derived from William Wallace White's diaries. Dates of entries are provided for referencing.

<sup>9</sup>*The Taylors of Tabernacle: The History of a Family*, Vol. II., p. 9. It is unclear whether the editors of this work are quoting from *Bracey's Life by the Roaring Roanoke* or some other work.

<sup>10</sup>Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism*. p. 137.

<sup>11</sup>Boyd, "History of Townsville," p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>Wes Young, "Granville Was Leader in Leaf Manufacturing in Early Days" *Henderson Daily Dispatch*, August 4, 1984, Section B, p. 1.

## CHAPTER SIX

<sup>1</sup>Robert W. Lynn and Elliott Wright, *The Big Little School: 200 Years of the Sunday School*. 2nd edition, revised and enlarged. (Nashville and Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

<sup>4</sup>All other references in this chapter are to local church records.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

<sup>1</sup>All references in this chapter are to local church records.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

<sup>1</sup>Boyd, "History of Townsville" unpublished paper, pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>"Minutes of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1919". We are indebted to the Reverend C. Franklin Grill, Conference Historian of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church for this documentation.

<sup>3</sup>Other references in this chapter are to local church records or matters of public information.

## CHAPTER NINE

<sup>1</sup>The idea of "the living reminder" has been popularized by the Reverend Henri J.M. Nouwen in his book, *The Living Reminder: Service and Prayer in Memory of Jesus Christ*

(New York: Seabury Press, 1977), especially p. 37f.

<sup>2</sup>Other references in this chapter are noted in the text as the stories and remembrances of members of our congregation.

<sup>3</sup>Lyrics from hymn by Isaac Watts adapted from Psalm 90, "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" *The Book of Hymns* (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1966), No. 28.

#### **APPENDIX ONE**

<sup>1</sup>Membership rolls from local church records.

#### **APPENDIX TWO**

<sup>1</sup>Documentation for each minister's biography in this section would take more space than is warranted. Three sources were used in compiling these biographical summaries: Obituary and/or Eulogies printed in the "Minutes" of the Virginian and North Carolina Conferences available in the Archives Room of the Methodist Building, Raleigh, North Carolina; the files of Mrs. Vivian Mitchell, Secretary to the Bishop of the Raleigh Area of the United Methodist Church; entries in *The Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, edited by Nolan B. Harmon, et. al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974) Vols. I and II.

Other information incorporated into these summaries was provided by members of Tabernacle United Methodist Church.

#### **APPENDIX THREE**

<sup>1</sup>Scott T. Wilkinson, ed. *The Thomas Mann Journal* (Divinity School paper and original research dated November 15, 1977) unpublished paper provided by The Reverend C. Franklin Grill, Conference Historian of the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. See journals for 1816 and 1829-30.









# History of Tabernacle United Methodist Church



1784—1984









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